

MAGAZINE OF ART

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JURGIS BALTRUSAITIS: **EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY GARDENS**

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THE BARNES SUIT



THE *Philadelphia Inquirer* has brought suit against the Barnes Foundation to compel it to open its doors to the public. We applaud and support this action, and feel sure that backed as it is by precedent and good sense it will be sustained in the courts. The Foundation's pretense that its educational procedures make it necessary to exclude all but an occasional visitor chosen (as the *Inquirer* says) by the "whims and fancies" of the Trustees, is obvious nonsense. To prejudice who will and who will not profit from seeing and studying acknowledged masterpieces (as the Foundation and its founder have been doing for years) is simple effrontery—whatever its pretended reasons and its real motives may be. In this case, as in so many others, the public is best served by allowing it to serve itself. Thus we may hope that the magnificent collection of Renoirs, Cézannes and Matisses, as well as hundreds of other paintings, will soon be accessible to all on such a basis that the Foundation may justly be called an educational institution.

It is in a way too bad that the *Inquirer's* suit has had to be based on the legal question of the right of the Foundation to tax exemption. For its more fundamental justification lies elsewhere. Albert C. Barnes was an anachronism, and he in his Foundation was the locus of one of the typical myths of the golden age of modern art. Barnes was the very type of the genius-collector. He was the counterpart of the genius-artist by whom modern art has been made, and like the artist he was lonely, self-reliant, egotistical—and finally right. It was this rightness, or the legend of it that he created and held fast against ridicule and pressure (supposedly proof of a faith matching that of the artists whose works he collected) that gave him his undoubted fascination. His monumental bad manners—unbelievable but amply documented—were, to be sure, inexcusable, whatever their roots in the good doctor's psychological and social history;

and they caused needless inconvenience and embarrassment to many people. Despite this they called forth a kind of grudging admiration and were in a way accepted as inevitable. This was perhaps because there was some suspicion that they were a necessary ingredient of a personality supremely self-confident against odds, whose positive sign and whose success were documented in a collection of masterpieces. The exact history of the Barnes collection, and the fact that after its beginnings (which may even have been accidental and external to its owner's conscious taste) it was hardly created in isolation against the prevailing current but rather in line with the most informed taste of his period, are of little importance compared to the legend that seemed required. Barnes became the symbol of the collector whose confident backing of his own judgment was justified in the end.

But in the end Barnes betrayed his own legend. For it is part of the tradition that the lonely artist shall finally be rewarded with the warmth of fame and adulation and that the brave collector will make the results of his kind of courage available to all, when once public taste has caught up with him and acknowledged that (like the artist) he was only ahead of his time. It has been our assumption that works of art, however isolated in creation, however rare in appreciation, belong finally to the public. The artist eventually joins the stream of tradition and is seen to have his legitimate forebears and descendants, and the collector acts in the last analysis as an agent of enlightened public taste. Thus the works he has gathered must in some way be turned back to the society from which they came. This has been the tradition of Western culture ever since the Louvre was made into a public museum; this is the tradition which the Barnes Foundation essentially ignores; and this is the tradition which the *Inquirer's* suit (apart from its legal techniques) seeks to vindicate. R. G.

THE VIRGIN AND THE DYNAMO

R. P. Blackmur

HENRY ADAMS had a great flair for globe-trotting, and wherever he went always, did his best to perfect the habit of responding to vivid values, which, according to Whitehead, is the habit of art. Adams was an artist in his vivid values, and nowhere more so than at the world's fairs, which for years he made special efforts to attend—unless it was perhaps more so at the French cathedrals of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which he also visited constantly. The cathedrals, for Adams, were fairs held by the Virgin. The world's fairs of his own time, especially the Paris Exposition of 1900, belonged to the Dynamo. The Virgin united the universe. The Dynamo expressed the terrible multiplicity of the multiverse. Adams, as an artist, tried to make images for both which should show the two extremes of human aspiration clustered up with the conditions and story of human life.

Let us begin with the cluster of the Great Exposition of 1900. Like the Exposition at Chicago, the general impression was chaos: the science unintelligible, the art retrograde, the history either eccentric or dubious, and only the midway plaisance plain; but unlike Chicago, which was supposed to make a new leap, Paris represented a continuity: it celebrated the end of nineteen centuries of Christendom, it brought together in one fair all Europe and America could show in one year at one place, and it marked the beginning of a new century—a new distribution and a new concentration and a new economy of forces. And it did all this, in a sense that Chicago did not, within the sight and living zone of the great monuments of another effort at the economy of mind which had reached its crisis some seven centuries earlier. The old effort was marked by the cathedrals and churches of the Virgin, by the city of Paris itself with its Saints of the Crusades and its stranger Saints of the Schools. The new effort was marked by the great hall of forty-foot dynamos. Both represented efforts at an economy of force which added to the power of society without adding equally to society's control over the forces it used; each gained its power through the invention of a mechanism for the transmission of occult force—the one biological and religious, the other physical and abstract—from one form to another more

available, but no less mysterious, form. The greatness of the Exposition to Adams (as he tells us in *The Education of Henry Adams*) was that one mystery not only reminded him of the other but fairly demanded the other, as the left foot demands the right in walking.

To Samuel Pierpont Langley of the airships and the Smithsonian, the dynamo was a motor which was also a channel for converting the heat in coal into electricity; it was a development and economy of force. To Adams the dynamo was also a symbol of infinity, in its remoteness from the coal or water that gave it vertiginous speed and quiet power; therefore, like the Cross, it was a moral force, and prayer was the natural expression before it: the value was in the *occult* mechanism between steam and electric current, between Cross and cathedral. "The forces were interchangeable if not reversible, but he could see only an absolute *fiat* in electricity as in faith"; and if the dynamo were not enough, there were the new rays—or radiations—of the salts of radium, which were wholly new and were therefore anarchic in the absoluteness of *fiat*. That is, the new forces which men so rapidly developed and economized had no equivalent in any existing scale of measure. Man "had entered a supersensual world, in which he could measure nothing except by chance collisions of movements imperceptible to his senses, perhaps even imperceptible to his instruments, but perceptible to each other, and so to some known ray at the end of the scale."

Resuming for the moment his old role of historian, Adams reflected once more that in all the old assumptions about sequence of cause and effect, the unit or standard of measure had been accepted unconsciously and had, when examined, turned out either groundless or incongruous; yet history depended on intelligible sequence and acceptable scale. As historian Adams resolved, therefore, under the impact of two supersensual worlds—the Dynamo and the Virgin—to try the sequence of force. "He insisted on a relation of sequence, and if he could not reach it by one method, he would try as many methods as science knew." Taken as force, the nearest equivalent to the radium or dynamo of 1900 was the Cross of Constantine in 310. Both forces were occult, supersensual and irrational; they did not follow,



Ferdinand Dutert, Hall of Machinery, Paris Exposition, 1889.

West façade, Amiens Cathedral, 13th century



but they affected the modes of man's thought. They were, in scholastic language, "immediate modes of divine substance"—whatever that substance might be; and the second seemed as likely as the first to make a creative revolution in the actual world—or rather, in the daylight, sensible, rational half of man's mind. Thus, in making his

sequence, he had to treat the rays of radium as the fourth century had treated the Cross—that is, as they had been felt: as attractions on thought; and for the same reason, he had to treat the Cross as a felt radiation of physical force. In order to establish the relation between the terms of his sequence, "he would risk translating rays into faith."

The extremity of imaginative risk in Adams' resolve—the risk of *hubris*, of the fatally arrogant and fundamentally unseemly deed—becomes plain when he reveals the second move to which he was impelled. Adams had to choose, as couplet to radium and dynamo, not the Cross, but that other version of force which, as Venus, had so to speak skipped the Cross and come to rest in the Virgin, and which the Cross had represented partly by contrast, by abstraction and at a remove. What had been felt in the Cross was dead along with its forms; but what was represented by Venus and the Virgin as forms of faith was still felt, however unconsciously, and whether or not the forms—or, as Adams put it, the women—were dead. So, too, the force of the rays had always been felt, though the symbols through which the feeling became conscious had only just been discovered. No wonder he called this the most hazardous of all educations, with the hazard as great if he slipped either way in estimating the values of his sequence. "The knife-edge along which he must crawl, like Sir Lancelot in the twelfth century, divided two kingdoms of force which had nothing in common but attraction."

It had been Chrétien de Troyes who first told that part of Lancelot's perilous search. As one of his feats in the rescue of Guinevere, Sir Lancelot had to cross a bridge made of a sword

as sharp as a scythe, which he did barehanded and barefoot, badly cutting himself, but couraged by love to the sticking point. This was the greatest single hazard that Lancelot had to take, and was so announced to him on every hand; if he crossed that bridge and lived, his whole enterprise would be eventually successful. The general effect in Chrétien's context is that the hazard of the bridge is divine—a concrete anticipation of Pascal's *Divin Hasard*—or at any rate somehow supernatural; no more or less perilous than the human hazards of treachery and battle and lust, it was more significant and more serious. Its risk, like that of Tannhäuser, perhaps combined the values of Venus and Virgin; values which in Lancelot's time, though they were felt and served together by the necessities of the imagination, must have seemed as perilous to combine as to Adams it was to combine, in order to make either intelligible, Venus and Virgin on one hand and the Dynamo on the other.

Adams on his knife's edge made progress question by cutting question, and the questions were cries, and the cries the same cry differently voiced as the pilgrim winced in a deeper or a different place, till it seemed that the cry alone kept him in bare balance. What had happened to men and women in America, that though they moved by sex, they did not feel what moved them as a force but only as a waste or scandal of force? "The force of the Virgin was still felt at Lourdes, and seemed to be as potent as X-rays; but in America neither Venus nor Virgin ever had value as force—at most as sentiment. No American had ever been truly afraid of either." For two pages Adams went on to ask why America and American women have been ashamed of sex, seeing in it sin and weakness, never strength, fecundity, the animated dynamo, the greatest and most mysterious of all energies. Sex was "the highest energy known to man, the creator

of four-fifths of his noblest art, exercising vastly more attraction over the human mind than all the steam-engines and dynamos ever dreamed of; and yet this energy was unknown to the American mind. An American Virgin would never dare command; an American Venus would never dare exist."

To emphasize by contrast how both Venus and Virgin had been felt as force, Adams quotes from Lucretius and Dante. From the former's *On the Nature of Things* he takes the twenty-first line of the first book, underlining one word: "*Quae quoniam rerum naturam sola gubernas*," to which, because they were so apt to his own case, he might well have added the next four lines. In the Loeb translation these lines read as follows: "Since therefore thou alone dost govern the nature of things, since without thee nothing comes forth into the shining borders of light, nothing joyous and lovely is made, thee I crave as partner in writing the verses, which I essay to fashion touching the Nature of Things." It was to bring things into the shining borders of light that Adams, like Lucretius, invoked the radiant force of Venus, and, like Dante, of the Virgin. From the *Paradiso* he takes the tercet beginning with the thirteenth line of the thirty-third Canto; in the English of the Temple Classics, these lines cap the lines to Venus: "Lady, thou art so great and has such worth that if there be any who would have grace yet betaketh not himself to thee, his longing seeketh to fly without wings"; for Adams knew beyond anything that his longing for grace needed wings to fly. In short, he was making the poet's invocations his own.

This sense of personal invocation Adams expresses lightly, in passing, and by means of a rather curious figure. "Before this historical chasm, a mind like that of Adams felt itself helpless; he turned from the Virgin to the Dynamo as though he were a Branly coherer"—an instrument

Lancelot Crossing the Bridge of Swords, French miniature, 13th century, M. 806, fol. 166, The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York





*Virgin of south transept portal,
Amiens Cathedral, French, 13th century*

"Venus Genitrix,"

Roman copy of Greek 5th-century B.C. original, Louvre, Paris



which he had previously suggested had an absolute value incapable of expression in a mathematical equivalent. According to the textbooks, a Branly coherer is one of the most sensitive detectors of electric currents and operates on the principle that the resistance of loose metallic contacts is diminished when struck by electric currents: as one might say that a facial expression eases at the coming of a thought waited for, or that—and this was Adams' case—the mind relaxes as it helplessly accepts the forces it feels coursing through it as thought.

But relaxation is preface to new tension, in which every muscle in the mind cries, "Help, help!" The Virgin had been above all a creature of that cry; she gave the help of understanding and worship and piety to the force she represented, both in her role of Venus, the mother of men, and in her heavenly role of mother of God and men's thoughts; she had been the idea of men's actions. Yet in America the idea survived only as art—and in Whitman only—or as sentiment, never as force. "American art, like the American language and American education, was as far as possible sexless. Society regarded this victory over sex as its greatest triumph." With Augustus Saint-Gaudens, who being an American artist and in Paris, like Adams himself, for the Great Exposition of the development and economy of force, Adams went to the Virgin's cathedral at Amiens, to see what would happen. It was at once plain that "the art remained but the energy was lost even upon the artist." Saint-Gaudens began to seem to Adams one more in the long train of figures—Garibaldi, Grant, Cameron—who, because they represented blind and inarticulate energy and still did the work of the world, made insoluble the relation between intelligence and inertia. Where the previous figures had been men of affairs, Saint-Gaudens was an artist; like the others he was pure act, but his act was an act of taste. "He could not imitate, or give any form but his own to the creations of his hand. No one felt more strongly than he the strength of other men, but the idea that they could affect him never stirred an image in his mind." Adams thought of Gibbon, who in his own phrase "darted a contemptuous look on the stately monuments of superstition," and reminded himself that Gibbon brought on the French Revolution; and he thought of Ruskin who had lectured on the same monuments in reaction against the Revolution. "One sees what one brings." Saint-Gaudens brought himself and admired the monuments as taste—the art apart from what had compelled its existence. Saint-Gaudens had lost, not his strength, but his knowledge of its source. "He writhed and cursed at his ignorance, much as Adams did at his own, but in the opposite sense. Saint-Gaudens was a child of Benvenuto Cellini, smothered in an American cradle. Adams was a quintessence of Boston,

devoured by curiosity to think like Benvenuto. Saint-Gaudens' art was starved from birth, and Adams' instinct was blighted from babyhood. Each had but half of a nature, and when they came together before the Virgin of Amiens they ought both to have felt in her the force that made them one; but it was not so. To Adams she became more than ever a channel of force; to Saint-Gaudens she remained as before a channel of taste."

Here again Adams had a private source for his conclusion: a feeling which when examined proved unaccountable and so could not directly be put in the context, but a feeling the

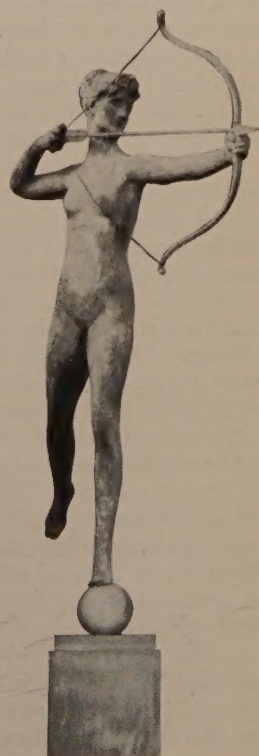


Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Grief (Adams Memorial)*, 1891, Rock Creek Park Cemetery, Washington



Giovanni da Bologna, *Mercury*, late 16th century, bronze, National Gallery of Art, Washington

Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Diana*, 1892, bronze, 13' high, Philadelphia Museum of Art



edding quality of which is roused in the echoes of the context. May not that quality transpire if it is remembered that all the relation between Saint-Gaudens and Adams over the monument at Rock Creek showed Adams as in an unusually creative position and Saint-Gaudens in an unusually plastic position, and that Adams afterwards referred to the monument as "my creation" of the Virgin? With such considerations tacitly framing his mind, Adams, in the *Education*, merely remarks that Saint-Gaudens instinctively took the horse as the channel of power, adding: "The attitude was so American that, for



Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Monument to General Sherman, 1892-1903, bronze, 59th-Street Plaza, New York

at least forty years, Adams had never realized that any other could be in sound taste." But it was not only that the American naturally translated his notion of power into horsepower, but that the instinct that led him to do so was faulty: it kept him from making live images of the steam and electric power with which he was really concerned, or at least it lit up his inability to do so. To conceive twentieth-century man as on a horse was as fatal as conceiving him a king: it was an outmoded and blinkered role, except socially; or, to make the best of it, it made a lesser power pass in symbol for a major. Yet Saint-Gaudens, or the American, was not alone; Matthew Arnold at the Grande Chartreuse was no better. "Neither of them felt goddesses as power—only as reflected emotion, human expression, beauty, purity, taste, scarcely even as sympathy." Arnold and Saint-Gaudens were precisely, as Adams had been when he wrote his novels but was no longer, "wandering between two worlds, the one dead, the other powerless to be born"; and the difference between them and Adams lay in Adams' effort to *feel* both Virgin and Dynamo as one force. The effort of feeling is esthetic.

To Adams it had become a necessity of mind that these forces acted interchangeably on men, and it was to him a fact that "by action on man all known force may be measured," and the

force was measured in symbol. More important: "The symbol was force, as a compass-needle or a triangle was force, as the mechanist might prove by losing it, and nothing could be gained by ignoring their value. Symbol or energy, the Virgin had acted as the greatest force the Western world ever felt, and had drawn man's activities to herself more strongly than any other power, natural or supernatural, had ever done; the historian's business was to follow the track of the energy; to find where it came from and where it went to . . . its values, equivalents, conversions." So, once more, Adams laid out his work.

That symbol was force is a conception plain to him who first sees a watch or is first wounded by a gun; it is also plain enough to those who have a disposition to create new symbols; but to those merely familiar, the force may seem watered and the symbol sickly. The question is how far we can say that the mariner's compass is not only a symbol but itself the force that opened up the overseas world. It is the question whether radium is the symbol, or itself the force, of matter breaking down—of which the process permits (and is itself identical with) work to be done, change to occur, life to happen. It is the question whether the triangle (as the model or armature of an enclosed area) is the symbol, or itself the force, that permits the management of plane surfaces. Or it is the question, to take a more nearly irrational abstraction, whether π is the symbol, or itself the force, that permits the management of curved surfaces, and so on. All these images of the mind have complexities and convertibilities and shifting channels as they symbolize or perform work.

So does the Virgin. All might work on man, but none would perform man's work without their symbolic form; neither help nor heal is possible without the image of intent. That is, in both sets of cases, the energies at work are occult, can be tapped only through symbolic form and can be tested only through a kind of imaginative empiricism, a kind of spiritual pragmatism. The degree of imagination or spirit at which one feels one's expression change—a new look come into the eyes, or an old waver—is the standard of understanding. The degree of experience or practice at which the felt expression becomes a skill in the fingers is the test of truth. If these stipulations seem uncertain, it is at any rate certain that neither mere articulateness—the open formula—nor mere inarticulateness—the stress of blind intuition—is a satisfactory test of any relation in the realm of the occult. Only the shifting clusters of unaccountable meanings which attach themselves to what we call the symbols of that relation give them vitality and resourcefulness. Thus the symbol almost always expresses more force than it seems to, and commands rather less than it pretends to; so that when one is actually setting up relations

between symbols, or between symbols and the forces they express, one had better both look for more than appears and cut down on practical expectations: as in love or the atom.

In the effort of relating radiant powers that had occult sources—the effort of translating rays into faith—all these questions and considerations raised themselves and made a kind of general motion in Adams' mind which drove him to depend more and more upon the Virgin for each point of departure and termination. The Virgin, of all available symbols of radiant energy, had both the richest cluster of unaccountables and the most familiar attributes; she attracted the mind most and stirred most responses; she was the most human; therefore she seemed easiest to handle; because one could bring more to see her with, one could feel more surely the force she represented. To find an equivalent symbol in the Dynamo required an equivalent state of awareness, a congruous sense of the unaccountable and a comparable sense of the familiar. Being inhuman, the Dynamo offered little help.

Reaching some such conclusion, Adams fell back on those modes of the mind which had created, or discovered, the symbolic force of the Virgin, that is, those esthetic modes which may include even the most abstract algebra among their means to the concrete and their avenues to the occult, just as they insist that the most concrete or dramatic images, once they are put in motion, force themselves into the abstract. These are the modes that seize an identity and feel an energy; it is not the means that count, when they are the means of science, but the dominance of the mode whereby the value rather than the development and economy of energy is seen. To the impasse of the Dynamo and the Virgin, the esthetic image is Adams' offered solution, and it is offered because the esthetic image is itself a force—unaccountable, occult, wayward; but also instinctive, immediate and familiar, in long good standing.

"In such labyrinths," Adams begins his commitment to the esthetic modes, "the staff is a force almost more necessary than the legs; the pen becomes a sort of blind-man's dog, to keep him from falling into the gutters. The pen works for itself, and acts like a hand, modelling the plastic material over and over again to the form that suits it best. The form is never arbitrary, but is a sort of growth like crystallization, as any artist knows too well; for often the pencil or pen runs into side-paths and shapelessness, loses its relations, stops or is bogged. Then it has to return on its trail, and recover, if it can, its lines of force. The result of a year's work depends more on what is struck out than on what is left in; on the sequence of the main lines of thought, than on their play or variety."

There is a kind of deep pluralism in this

paragraph, a reversal of values and principles, a dialectic, in the Hegelian sense, of mind and theme, which issues in a quivering shapelessness that is the critical point in any invoked metamorphosis from one phase of thought to another. It asks the question: Does the mind bring itself to its theme or does the theme absorb the mind? Do the helps to which the mind resorts—its currents of algebra and its formularies of emotion—transform the theme or the mind? Does one write what one wills, or does one write to discover—to see and feel its crystallization—the will to which one must assent? The answers, like the questions, are all double, and if choice is cast either way it only makes the duplicity deeper. But Adams was not trying to give answers, and he was only implying the questions: he was exemplifying the process by which he wrote and the idiosyncrasy of the special difficulties with which he had to cope. The process had to involve a good deal of ad-libbing, of trial and trial and subsequent discard, because the symbols or forces he was trying to triangulate exerted pressures which could not be articulated by any means short of crystallization—by unforeseeable, precipitated growth.

The process, the difficulties and the growth become plain enough if a résumé is made of the chapter which the passage quoted concludes. The essence of the chapter lies in the phrase, *Symbol was force*, and its exegesis is when it is crystallized with that other phrase, *One sees what one brings*. Langley and the Dynamo, Gibbon, Saint-Gaudens and Amiens Cathedral, the notion of symbol and the notion of style, are the whole story. Lodgment is secured by the opposition of Lucretius and Dante (Venus and Virgin) to sex in American society, with the extension in which the idea of sex is seen as surviving only as art and the art surviving only as taste.

When what has been felt as a primary force and cultivated as a symbol comes to be felt only as art and cultivated only as taste, then, by so much, have the values of life lost their edges in settling twilight.

In a wallet of special papers there was found after Adams' death a poem which he had written some time after the turn of the century, not too long after the visit to the hall of dynamos at the Paris Exposition, not too long before he began the actual writing of the book on the Virgin of Chartres. This lover of Matthew Arnold's poetry had here written his own version of *Dover Beach* and the *Grande Chartreuse*. The poem is called *Prayer to the Virgin of Chartres*, and it contains within it, at its center, a Prayer to the Dynamo. It is not a great poem, but it is dark in racking thought; it is the incentive and measure of the vivid values—the very habit of art—which shine on the two great works he then wrote to the Virgin and the Dynamo.

WILLI BAUMEISTER

Hans Hildebrandt



Friendly Phantom, 1951

WILLI BAUMEISTER is generally regarded as a non-objective painter; but this is only half correct. To be sure, in the great majority of his paintings and graphic works one finds no associations with objects of the visible world, for he prefers to express what he wants to state or to represent by means of form and color only. But Baumeister has not made the abandonment of recognizable subject matter a consistent principle of his output in the sense that Kandinsky did, or, in a different way, Mondrian. He refuses to be bound by any program, even one of his own making. He demands for himself an absolute freedom of creative expression consistent with his inmost being; there, beyond the limits of either conscious will or intellectual purpose, lies a will to form intent upon coming into its own.

Not many artists are endowed with so clear an understanding of their own personalities and, furthermore, with the ability to put their comprehension into words. Willi Baumeister achieved such a feat in his book, *The Unknown in Art* (*Das Unbekannte in der Kunst*, Curt E. Schwab, Stuttgart, 1947). He accomplished this by virtue of insights gained in the course of decades of intense work and also because of the breadth of his interests, which embrace, in addition to art, the vast realm of modern physics and its cosmic concepts. *The Unknown in Art* is chiefly significant as a complete manifestation of a highly developed individuality. It is by no means a primer of the history of art. Historical

epochs are dealt with in the light of Baumeister's particular point of view, as he evaluates them in terms of his personal experience. It is his own creative processes which this book makes clear, tracing them back to their ultimate origins.

One can hardly disagree with Baumeister in according full recognition only to the "original" artist. With every artist deserving of that epithet, the creative process, by reason of his very originality, must of necessity take an exclusive and idiosyncratic course. His intuition and his conscious will are bound to combine in a special and unique way. With this in mind we may regard Baumeister's account of how a work of art comes into being—an account based on his own personal experience—as an informative interpretation of the creative process in general. The more so, since it has much in common with the utterances of other artists, including those of earlier periods.

In Baumeister's concept, the starting point for any genuine work of art produced by an original artist is the unexpected emergence of a vision, whose genesis remains a mystery even to the artist himself. But what happens to this germinal idea thereafter? "While the artist believes that he is working consistently nearer to his vision as the ultimate goal," says Baumeister, "he is imponderably influenced by formative drives which emanate from his psyche and impel him in quite another direction, towards an unfamiliar destination heretofore unknown. This

new course has veered away from his vision (or his model), to take the direction of inevitability and discovery. This deflection might be compared to the refraction of light in water or of light beams in 'curved' space. It is the path of discovery, like an intuitive flash of inspiration." Every problem which arises in the course of executing the work calls forth a new vision of what still remains to be created. This in turn imposes a new task, which once again meets with the same fate as the first and all successive visions. The process repeats itself until the final version, which in its completed form comes somewhat as a surprise even to the artist himself. Creative effort of this kind demands more of its practitioner than merely unrelenting concentration. It requires relentlessly severe self-criticism, ready to intervene whenever the right moment arrives. That Baumeister, an uncommonly productive artist, has always exercised such self-criticism is proof of his sense of responsibility as well as of his artistic integrity.

Born in 1889, Baumeister entered the Stuttgart Academy at the age of sixteen. He became a student of Adolf Hoelzel, who gathered about him in his classes all the most progressively minded painters of the younger generation. Within this group, Baumeister—like Oskar Schlemmer—was one of the small circle of independents who, in quest of a new art, accepted the leadership

of the slightly older and more mature Swiss painter, Otto Meyer. When Meyer returned to Switzerland, Baumeister went along and stayed with him for a year at Amden. He also received stimulating impressions during a trip to Paris, and by the time he returned to Stuttgart late in 1913 he had freed himself from the last vestiges of naturalism. In close association with Oskar Schlemmer, Baumeister strove to achieve in his painting freely creative construction.

Being drafted into the army during the first World War imposed a suspension of regular work but did not interrupt the progress of his inner development. After his return he produced in his *Wall Paintings* his first completely independent works. The very name is indicative of their relation to architecture. In 1922, at the Stuttgart exhibition of the *Deutscher Werkbund*, Baumeister's *Wall Paintings* manifested the same organic handling of space as Richard Doecker's interiors, both showing the trend of the "New Architecture." The *Wall Paintings* were composed of geometrized forms which dominated whatever barely suggested representational elements still remained in them. Generally painted upon a slightly modeled surface in low relief, they appeared to emerge out of the wall plane towards the spectator. Simultaneously, Baumeister applied the same principles of abstract, non-naturalistic art to a series of stage settings for contemporary

Hockey, lithograph, 1929



Wall painting, 1920



theatrical productions. The *Wall Paintings* brought him into contact with the Paris vanguard, Le Corbusier, Ozenfant and Léger. Their influence is apparent in Baumeister's *Machine Paintings* of 1924. In these compositions, dynamically powerful structures have finally replaced the last vestiges of represented figures. The *Machine Paintings* are a contrast to the *Sports Paintings* of the same period; in the latter series, the varying motives, though simplified beyond the limits of naturalism, still remain comprehensible as themes. The fact that the non-objective *Machine Paintings* were esthetically superior to the more representational *Sports Paintings* is indicative of the scope and character of Baumeister's particular talent.

In 1928, Baumeister became professor of applied graphic art at the Staedel Art School in Frankfurt-am-Main, which was then directed by Wichert. Ever since 1919 he had been actively interested in black-and-white. Through his own production as a printmaker and his activity as a teacher, he became—together with the Bauhaus master László Moholy-Nagy, Jan Tschichold in Munich and the Dutch Piet Zwart—one of the founders of modern typography, with its trend away from the tradition of symmetrical layouts. His work at the school made it difficult for Baumeister to find time for his activities as a painter, but his development continued in the direction of an ever-increasing abstraction.

After his brutal dismissal from the Staedel Art School in 1933, Baumeister returned to his native Stuttgart. Under Hitler's régime, an artist of his genre could work only in secret. Baumeister continued without compromise. Between 1933 and 1945 his art went through a number of phases, always tending towards that self-assurance and technical mastery which today are the distinctive traits of his production.

During the last years of the war, his studio at Stuttgart could no longer be used. Baumeister's undiminished creative zeal discovered a new field of endeavor which he could pursue even in his ill-equipped quarters out of the city: the graphic illustration of literature. In quick succession he turned out designs for the ancient Babylonian Gilgamesh epic, for the books of Esther and Saul from the heroic period of the Jewish people, for Salome's dance before Herod, and finally for that last, most magical drama of Shakespeare, *The Tempest*. Publication of these works as portfolios of lithographs (in the case of *The Tempest*, as a de-luxe illustrated edition of the text) had to await the end of the war. Though inspired by Biblical texts or dramatic dialogues, and fully in harmony with the spirit of their sources, these graphic compositions are not "illustrations" in the ordinary sense of the term. Their sign language is that of primitive hieroglyphics whose decipherment offers a tempting challenge for the spectator. Quite apart

from the motivating text, they have their own validity as independent prints. Like most of Baumeister's graphic works, they complement his painting and reflect its evolution.

A characteristic of Baumeister's method of work is his predilection for production in series. In wavelike ebb and flow such projects, occupying more or less prolonged periods of time, often consist of a considerable number of closely related pieces. Two consecutive series generally contrast with one another. This may be explained by Baumeister's instinctive desire to turn from the exhaustive use of one means of expression to another, in order to obtain from it a new "vision" whose realization is to culminate in another and new "unknown." Thus it is that Baumeister's development as a painter proceeds under the successive domination, now of line, now of color or chiaroscuro. Within each of these phases a constant change may be observed. Geometrical forms alternate with free organic ones, closed forms with open; richly orchestrated color follows after a phase of somber monochrome; sobriety succeeds gaiety. "With highly productive artists," says Baumeister in his book, "it is noteworthy that while works pertaining to the separate phases in their development exhibit similar traits, a proof of their artistry is their unwillingness to adhere consistently even to their own tradition. They tend time and again to break away from set formulas and start out anew without preconceptions, facing the unknown with confidence and thus instinctively maintaining a continual originality. In the case of weaker works, more of the 'known' remains; an anticipated goal has been achieved, and previous experiences utilized. The unknown, emerging from nought, cannot be anticipated by hypotheses. It cannot be sought; it can only be found."

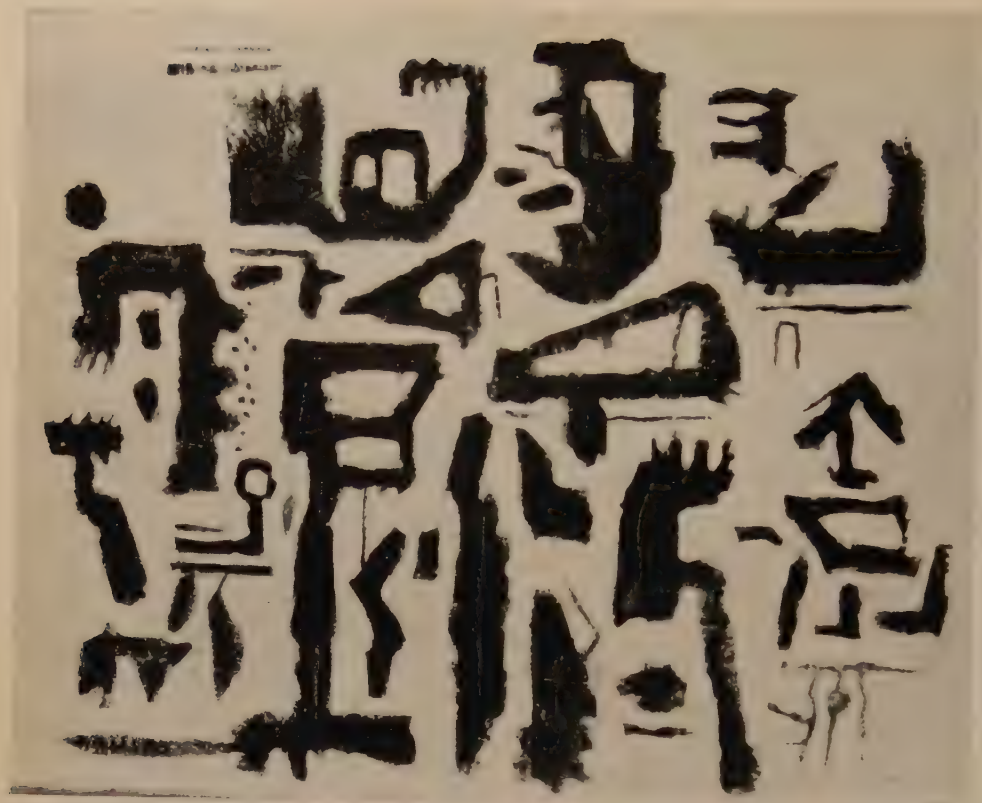
Although it would be tempting to trace the development of Baumeister's series from 1933 on, all we can do here is select a few as examples. The *Sand Paintings*—so called from the admixture of sand with some of the pigments—suggest in an abstract way only vague memories of objective themes, like tennis, the painter in his studio, and so forth. The *Ideograms*—inspired by Far Eastern calligraphy—exhibit against light backgrounds black forms, which in the *Flying Forms* become geometrized patterns, similar in their basic structure but varying in direction and scale. Color dominates again in the *Eidos Series*, characterized by a polarity of tensions between amoeba-like forms floating on the surface and a dense world of mysterious organisms in depth. All weight seems abandoned in a series of light pictures which in a burst of color deploy a gay play of lines over bright nuances of red, blue and green. At the same period that Baumeister did the Gilgamesh drawings, he executed murals in relief, with symbols like hieroglyphics painted in nothing but varied tones of gray. The mys-



Rising Fish, 1951, oil, 30 x 36",
courtesy Hacker Gallery

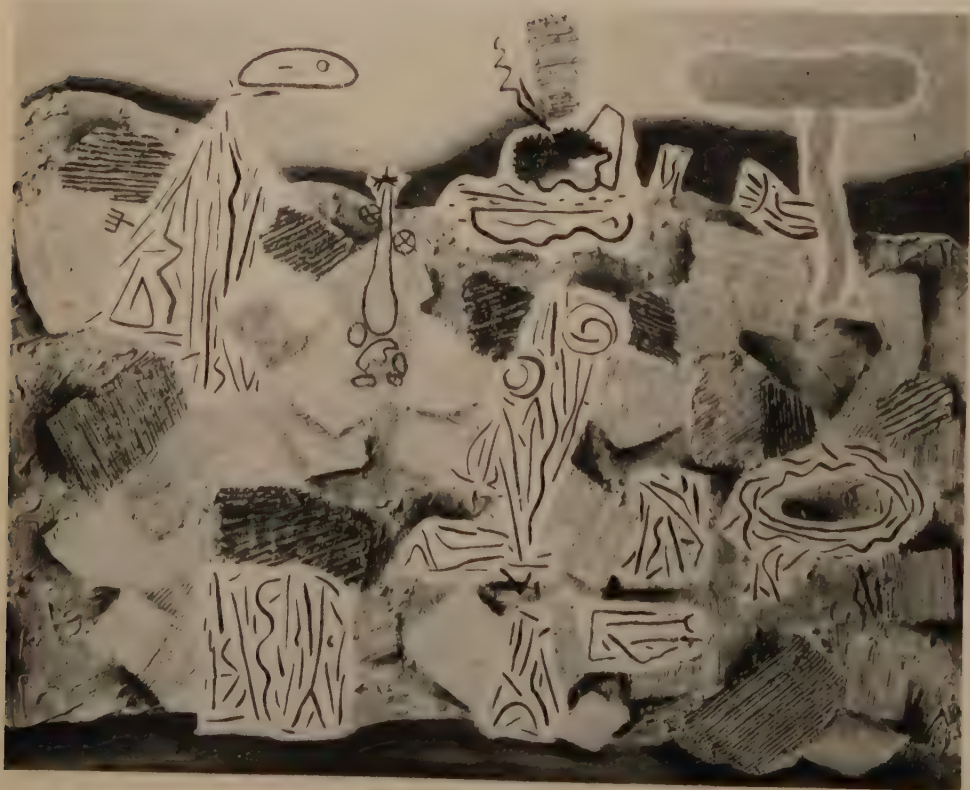


Figure with Yellow Spiral, 1950



Painting from African Series, 1942

Crystal Formation, 1947



tically haunting *African Series* enamates from Baumeister's intense preoccupation with prehistoric African cave paintings. In the *Comb Paintings*, color again takes the ascendancy, with delicate and bright harmonies. The various contrasting fields into which the surface of these paintings is divided owe the peculiar charm of their texture to a technique that employs a comb. The geometrized *Crystal Formations* seem to show the growth of crystals in the womb of mother earth.

The years 1950 and 1951 were especially productive ones for Baumeister and again included a number of fascinating stage designs. Once more we find two contrasting series: one executed in bright colors, the other in black and white. Yet they have in common elements of real significance. In both series, carefully calculated, balanced "composition" has been replaced by "decomposition." The structural elements—with no one feature singled out for stardom—are scattered all over the pictorial expanse. They are vitally interrelated but not ranged in a hierarchy of supremacy or subordination. In lieu of restfulness there is constant mobility. The principle of a recurrent form or color motive has been discarded. And precisely because of their isolation, the accented themes appear all the more impressive.

Within the first of these series—the one featuring color—the chromatic interplay takes place against a background, not of white, as generally in Baumeister's earlier work, but of red, blue, yellow or green. Thus the wine-red background of the largest of these pictures serves as foil to closed forms in black, vermilion, blue, green, light yellow and brown-orange.

The most recent black-and-white series was anticipated in a few works in which Baumeister covered a light background with lines one might describe as inscriptions. Their attraction lies in their emotional improvisation. These fully matured works are replete with energy. Irregular dark configurations gather and disperse against a lighter background like clouds in a storm, grow and melt away before our eyes like frost crystals on a windowpane, or fly above the calm, hill-like bands near the lower edge. At times the motion is so intensified as to produce the impression of an explosion. The general effect is of black on white. Yet the dark tones are chromatically differentiated; within the darkest brown, deep blue and subdued yellow find luminous expression.

Since 1947 Willi Baumeister has been professor at the Stuttgart Academy, where he is much sought after as a teacher. He describes his pedagogical method in these terms: "The artist is confronted with an absolute and immaculately pure surface, while nature offers to the eye variegated surfaces (grains of wood, clouds, rippled water, geological formations, etc.). The first problem for the student is to learn how to

give textural modulation to his surface plane. At the outset his work must contain no strong individual stresses, no 'soloists' of form and color, no decorative elements, no repetitive patterns. With this problem the student is immediately brought into close working contact with a multiplicity of painter's media and with the procedures of color application. Then the development of form follows gradually as an outcome of the virulent surfaces. Gradually, forms—restricted at first to a scale of black-gray-white—set up an interplay of relationships. The composition of free equilibrium and the composition of tensions (Mondrian) are taken into consideration but are no longer regarded as of overriding importance. It is rather the study of formal relationships and of expression through form that claims our attention today."

Despite its clarity and didacticism, Baumeister's system is quite practical. It does not simply offer instruction in picture-making, which—as things are nowadays—would be of doubtful professional value. The principles of his doctrine about surfaces and their activation are so fundamental that they are equally applicable as a basis for typography, poster art, textile designs, stage settings and even architectural work, and they thus serve to direct the student into every sphere of productive activity.

Note: Recent paintings of Baumeister are on view at the Hacker Gallery in New York until April 26th.

Composition, lithograph,
21 7/8 x 16 13/16", Museum of Modern Art



JOSEPH WRIGHT OF DERBY

Charles E. Buckley

ON August 29th, 1797, death ended the career of Joseph Wright of Derby. When his friend and patron, John Leigh Philips, wrote his obituary in the *Monthly Magazine* for October of that year, he was tracing the life of an artist whose work, from the time it was first seen in London, had ranked high in the estimation of his contemporaries. Philip's generous opinion was widely shared, and it seemed as though a figure of some stature had been lost to British art. And yet, from almost the moment of his death, Wright slipped into obscurity. This was owing largely to changes in fashion and to the fact that for much of his life he had had few personal contacts with London; moreover, his pictures were difficult to see, as they were often hung in country houses where they were all but forgotten.

Wright was fated to remain in limbo until 1883, when William Bemrose effected a partial rescue by publishing a monograph. In the same year a small exhibition of his work was held in Derby. Since then several minor exhibitions have cast further light into the shadows. A second monograph appeared in 1922, adding slightly to Bemrose's contribution. In 1934, in observance of the bicentenary of the artist's birth, a more positive effort to draw attention to him was made in Derby, when one hundred and fifty-six pictures were assembled for the first review of any consequence within recent years. While many fine pictures were lent for the occasion, almost as many more, privately owned, were overlooked for one reason or another. Further, the exhibition included a number of paintings of questionable authenticity and of little esthetic merit, which today would not be attributed to Wright. There can be little doubt that our present knowledge of his work is in need of expansion and clarification; however, with the gradual revival of interest and the emergence of pictures of genuine merit, long hidden in private collections, a re-evaluation must inevitably follow.

Throughout his life Wright, in spite of his "provincialism"—he lived most of his life in Derby—knew reasonable success as a portrait painter. His earliest efforts in this direction follow, as might be expected, the established manner of Hudson, with whom Wright had several years of training. Not long after 1760, however, a more personal style emerges, which may be illus-



Mrs. Clayton of Liverpool,
after 1760, oil, 50 x 40", John Nicholson Gallery, New York

trated by the vivid portrait of *Mrs. Clayton of Liverpool*. In its essential simplicity and directness, this picture reminds one of the American phase of Copley far more than of any of Wright's English contemporaries. With only a token recognition of accepted portrait conventions in the column and drapery at the left, Wright devotes full attention to the sitter herself, who, seated at a small table, presides with dignity over an architect's plan. The realism of these early portraits is often very convincing, and although modified in time it remains characteristic of Wright's best portraits throughout his career.

But while he is recognized as an able portrait painter, greater interest is shown today in another aspect of his career—his subject pictures, with their often extraordinary concentration on the effects of strong light. Wright himself undoubtedly looked upon portrait painting as a means of support but considered his subject pictures to be of higher importance. These reveal an unconventional imagination, sensitive to fully developed romantic subject matter. They include the candlelight, industrial and scientific subjects, the effects of fire and of moonlight, historical subjects and illustrations for the Boydell Shakespeare Gallery, as well as some of his landscapes.

Wright exhibited for the first time in 1765, in London, with the Society of Artists in their rooms in Spring Gardens. By 1791, when he last exhibited in London, a surprisingly small total of only one hundred and eight pictures had been shown—either at the Society of Artists, to which he remained faithful long after most of the leading artists of the day had transferred their favors to the Royal Academy, or at the Royal Academy itself, to whose exhibitions he had begun to contribute in 1778. In 1785 twenty-five of his important pictures were shown separately in "Mr. Robbins Rooms at Covent Garden." At the time of Wright's first appearance it was not a portrait in the strict sense that he sent, but one of his earliest subject pictures, the *Three Persons Viewing the Gladiator by Candlelight*.

The picture's principal interest resides in the provocative manner in which the artist treats the strong light, whose source is a candle concealed by the shoulder of the artist himself, seen in profile. So powerful a chiaroscuro study warrants comparison with Caravaggio, Honthorst or Schalken. It is known that candlelight pictures by Schalken, who had worked for several years in London at the end of the seventeenth century, appealed to English collectors; yet Wright appears to have developed and refined his highly sensitive and meditative attitude towards light in a way that is largely innocent of direct influence. Surely the subject matter that he employs for its expression is not found elsewhere in eighteenth-century England. There is also a somewhat more scientific attitude—pseudo or real—to the physical properties of light, with

implied overtones of inherent mystery and power. In the *Gladiator* the light glows with an almost supernatural brilliance, saturating these three figures who gather in earnest consultation, and demanding the attention of the spectator. Its handling is perhaps less baroque than one might expect in a picture in which strongly modeled forms turn abruptly from light into darkness. In this respect there is virtually no reference to reflected light. The light does not flow in relation to forms arranged according to a rhythmic pattern, but emanates from one specific source to co-exist with these static figures who are, essentially, as immobile as the gladiator itself.

Exploration of the phenomenon of light continues in the Tate Gallery's *Experiment with a Bird in the Air-Pump*, exhibited at the Society of Artists in 1768. In this case it is complementary to an actual "scientific" experiment. This large picture aptly reflects the expanding intellectual horizon of the age. Scientific demonstrations were popular at this time and must have aroused the curiosity and wonder of a generation beginning to grasp the full import of applied science. Science was no longer lost in the speculative realm of hypothesis but could, indeed, be effectively demonstrated with the aid of instruments. It had become fashionable and was on every hand the subject for stimulating and profitable discussion. The well-known Lunar Society of Birmingham typifies the prevailing intellectual climate. Founded about 1766, it was for nearly forty years a forum for discussion of matters of general scientific interest. The members assembled once a month, "near the full moon," says Dr.

Three Persons Viewing
the Gladiator by Candlelight,
1765, oil, 40 x 48", collection
Baroness Nairne, London





Experiment with a Bird in the Air-Pump, c. 1768, 72 x 96", Tate Gallery, London

William Pether, The Drawing Academy, mezzotint (after Joseph Wright, Academy by Candlelight, c. 1769), 23 x 18", Philadelphia Museum of Art



Priestley, "in order to have the benefit of its light in returning home." To this distinguished circle belonged many eminent men, among them Erasmus Darwin and Thomas Day (both friends of Joseph Wright), James Watt, William Murdock and Matthew Boulton.

Thus it is in a spirit of "scientific inquiry" that Wright approaches his subject, transforming it into something exciting and modern. The scene takes place at night in a room lighted from a single source concealed behind a glass jar. Gathered around a table, a group witnesses the progress of an experiment in which oxygen has

romanticism of a visionary. Wright does not neglect the intense realism of his subject.

The following year he exhibited again at the Society of Artists, showing an *Academy by Candlelight*, a subject quite different from that of the *Air-Pump*. It is probably from this picture that William Pether made the mezzotint of *The Drawing Academy* here reproduced. The subject is indeed curious; a vaulted room, distinctly classical in character, with a group of young students gathered around the cast of an antique sculpture, the whole strikingly illuminated by artificial light. In the background the gladiator



The Iron Forge, 1772, oil, 47 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 51 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", collection Countess Mountbatten, Broadlands (Hants.)

just been withdrawn from a large glass container holding a bird. The significance of the experiment has made an obvious impression on them, and its effect on the bird has clearly distressed the two youngest spectators. The powerful light delineates the features of every member of the group, as well as describing in detail the mechanical nature of the instruments. In the center, presiding over the air pump, is the "scientist," who, by adjusting a small valve, prepares to set the pump in action, thus restoring air to the glass container and presumably life to the bird imprisoned therein. Although the picture is thoroughly romantic in conception, it is not the

appears again. The flare of intense light, whose brilliance is further underscored by luminous dark areas, and the mysterious relationship that one senses between these brittle figures and the object of their concentration, implies something ominous and macabre. A rather "gothic" note is struck in certain of Wright's subject pictures of the late 1760's and early 1770's: *The Old Man and Death*, *Democritus Studying Anatomy*, *Mirvan Breaking Open the Tomb of his Ancestors*.

The middle of the eighteenth century saw the first glimmerings of industrial activity in the Midlands. It was a period of slowly accelerating economic change, in which the old

way of life altered in favor of a new and radically different pattern. In certain parts of Derbyshire primitive forges were engaged in the production of iron. It is the interior of such an establishment that Wright has represented in the *Iron Forge*, owned by Countess Mountbatten, whose ancestor, Lord Palmerston, acquired it in 1772 from the artist. In addition to other iron forges he was also to paint a glass-blowing works, and at least three "moonlight" views are known of the important water-powered cotton-spinning mills established in 1771 by Richard Arkwright at Cromford in Derbyshire.

In the *Iron Forge*, exhibited in 1772 at the Society of Artists, it is the white-hot, newly forged iron bar that illuminates the shed interior. Over the surface of the rough stone walls the sudden glow of light throws into momentary prominence the massive wooden beams, bound together with forged iron bands, and reveals the crude wooden equipment as well as the litter of tools on the floor. Something of the quality of a dream or a vision is here linked with an extraordinary concern for the realism of the subject. It is as though Wright were intensely aware of the meaning of so apparently simple, and yet ultimately so vital an operation, as the forging of an iron bar. In exploiting subject matter of this type, Wright was undoubtedly an innovator as well as something of a prophet, for these small and often isolated forges were the forerunners of the vast complex of industry which was soon to appear in the Midlands. Already iron was used in construction, and its importance had begun to be widely recognized. It is interesting to note that nearly a century later, in 1866, the American painter, John Ferguson Weir, painted the *Gun Foundry*, a picture which heralds the rapid expansion of industry in the United States.

These subject pictures were bound to attract attention as they dealt with matters of common interest and experience. In many instances they were acquired directly from the easel by prominent individuals at prices which were by no means negligible. For the *Iron Forge* Lord Palmerston had paid two hundred and ten pounds. Josiah Wedgwood, who purchased several pictures from Wright, paid one hundred and five pounds for *Penelope Unraveling her Web*, while Lord Melbourne was charged the same price for the *Academy by Candlelight*. For his major historical picture, *The Destruction of the Floating Spanish Batteries off Gibraltar*, Wright received the considerable sum of four hundred and twenty pounds. Nor was interest in his work confined to England alone. In Catherine II, Empress of Russia, he found a patron who acquired three large pictures for her collections at St. Petersburg: an *Eruption of Vesuvius*, a *Girandola at the Castle of Sant' Angelo* and an *Iron Forge Viewed from Without*. Further, some twenty-two subject pictures were

engraved over a period of about thirty years. The majority were impressively executed by such distinguished mezzotinters as Richard Earlom, John Raphael Smith and Valentine Green.

At the age of forty, Wright made his only visit to Italy. He arrived in Rome early in February, 1774. That his ability was soon recognized in Rome appears certain, as he wrote to his sister in August of that year, "My pictures are in great estimation here. I am shortly to be introduced to the Pope; it is thought he will honor me with his medal. . . ." But the death of the cultured Clement XIV in September deprived Wright of this anticipated honor.

In the fall he went briefly to Naples, where he witnessed an eruption of Vesuvius. Interest in the volcano was widespread following its spectacular eruption in 1766. In 1772 Sir William Hamilton supplied a detailed description of the crater in a series of letters, published as *Observations on Mount Vesuvius*. This was followed four years later by his chief work on the volcano, *Campi Phlegraei*. The eruption that Wright witnessed, coupled with his own interest in painting the effects of strong light, led to a series of pictures depicting Vesuvius in an active state. The subject evidently held a particular fascination for him, for he continued to paint it until the end of his life. While in Naples Wright also explored the romantic coast, and on several occasions was inspired by its moonlit shores or the interiors of its caverns. In *A Cavern, Evening*, dated 1774, he allows his fertile imagination to reflect on the mysterious enchantment of the light-struck interior. Massive rocks arch overhead, and through a small opening, pelvishaped with its accompanying reflection, is the sea, iridescent in the soft evening light. While he has expressed a feeling of wonder and reverie in the presence of a natural phenomenon, he has also observed the countless subtle variations in the color and form of the rocks. Similar qualities are evident in another remarkable cavern interior entitled *A Grotto by the Sea-Side in the Kingdom of Naples with Banditti; a Sunset*. The artist imagines a cave inhabited by bandits, who appear like actors in some half-forgotten classical drama. They gather with spears and plumed helmets, while the warm light of a late Mediterranean afternoon streams into the interior to conjure up a vision of faraway places and times. The effect of these pictures is overwhelmingly romantic, and while they may seem remote from Wright's more modern interest in nascent Midlands industry, there is nevertheless a connection in the mood that persists throughout, however different the actors and settings.

At the election of Clement XIV's successor, Pius VI, Wright was again in Rome and present at an extravagant display of fireworks in honor of the new Pope. In the *Girandola at the Castle of Sant' Angelo* he records this excit-



A Cavern, Evening, 1774, oil, 40 x 50", Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, Mass.

A Grotto in the Kingdom of Naples with Banditti; a Sunset, 1778, oil, 48 x 68", collection Mrs. Godfrey Meynell, Meynell Langley (Derby)





Girandola at the Castle of Sant' Angelo, 1774, oil, 55 x 68", Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool

ing spectacle as though it were a miniature Vesuvius, with full attention given to the flames, rocks and smoke issuing simultaneously from the castle. In composing his picture Wright has taken liberties with Rome, bringing St. Peter's close to the Castle where it receives strong illumination from the fire, and introducing the much misplaced Pantheon at the left.

In September, 1775, Wright was again in Derby, where, with the exception of an unsuccessful interval in Bath, he was to remain for the rest of his life. By far the most able portrait painter in the Midlands, he came to know, and to receive commissions from, some of the industrial pioneers of the day. Richard Arkwright, whose development of the spinning frame in the late 1760's revolutionized the manufacture of cotton goods, and whose rank as a leader in the new industrial society was of great importance, employed Wright to paint his portrait, still owned by the Arkwright family. The cotton lord is seen as a powerful and confident personality, fully expressive of the modern age, with the model of his spinning frame shown proudly beside him. Other sitters were Samuel Oldknow, the muslin manufacturer, and Jedediah Strutt, whose stocking frame was also of major importance in the early growth of Midlands industry. These were men of substance, and it is significant that they chose to be painted in the direct and forthright

manner so typical of Wright, rather than in the more fashionably "grand" manner suitable to persons of wealth and distinction. Just as Copley delineated the features of the rising merchant aristocracy in the colonies, so Joseph Wright did much the same thing for that important generation of middle-class origin coming into power in the last half of the eighteenth century.

But not all of Wright's portraits were of Midlands manufacturers. Among his friends he counted several members of the Lichfield literary society—notably Erasmus Darwin and Anna Seward—whose varied interests bore faint resemblance to those of the practical Arkwright, Oldknow or Strutt. The portrait of Sir Brooke Boothby, painted in 1781, shows the subject, who frequented the society of this circle, reclining with an air of casual affectation, a volume of Rousseau, whom he greatly admired, in his left hand. Boothby's "natural elegance," on which Anna Seward saw fit to remark, is interestingly brought out by the rustic setting with its gently flowing stream. It is as though Wright had composed the picture with the intention of symbolizing certain currently fashionable, if rather vague, theories—theories to which Boothby subscribed—affecting man's relationship to nature. The portraits from this period, without any sacrifice in the perception of character, show a greater assurance in the handling of both form and color,

with scarcely any trace of the stiffness that is occasionally evident in his earlier work.

While Wright continued to paint fire and moonlight effects long after his return from Italy, he now gave greater attention to the landscape at home. In the *View in Dovedale*, probably painted in the 1780's, the composition is simple and perhaps even obvious, but Wright's sensitive painting of morning light streaming from behind a delicate silhouette of clouds lifts it from the commonplace. It is the soft, hazy English light that Wright studies with such obvious care, and which ultimately brings the accurately observed details of familiar Derbyshire landscape into a kind of gentle Arcadian harmony. In comparison with his earlier pictures the touch throughout is infinitely lighter, although at times sparse and dry. The paint is now thinly applied, with the lights dragged across the surface in heavier impasto.

Like many of his contemporaries, Wright participated in John Boydell's elaborate scheme, formulated in 1786, to establish a school of historical painting. Shakespeare was to be the theme, and the participants were to work on large canvases with nearly life-size figures. As each picture was completed it was to be shown to the public in a specially constructed Shakespeare Gallery, which opened in 1789 with thirty-four pictures. The scheme prospered, and by 1805, when the contents of the gallery were dispersed, there were one hundred and seventy items on hand, eighty-four of them large in scale. Many of the pictures were engraved, as this was

an important part of the plan from the start. The engraved plates appeared in an impressive portfolio which immediately became a standard work in any well-furnished library. To Boydell's undertaking, Wright contributed four large pictures for *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest* and *Romeo and Juliet* in 1789-90; two were engraved for the portfolio. Three of these Shakespeare subjects are still in existence. Stylistically, they show Wright's relation to such painters as Barry, Northcote and Smirke. While they are creditable performances, they are also rhetorical and rather empty. However, they link Wright with an extremely interesting effort to utilize the talent of the day in a vast and complex project.

In a very real sense, Joseph Wright is like a largely submerged iceberg. His name is not unknown, but at the same time it is difficult to gain a well-rounded impression of his work. Wright's own lists of pictures (appended to Bemrose's book), while incomplete, are exasperating simply because of the number of recorded works whose present location is unknown. Slightly more than one hundred subject pictures are listed, and in addition there is an extensive roster of portraits. What has become of the many Italian subjects, of *Belshazzar at the Feast*, of Josiah Wedgwood's *Penelope* or of the important picture Wright made of the *Destruction of the Floating Spanish Batteries off Gibraltar*? as well as of many others, whose recovery would contribute to our understanding of one of the most interesting English painters of the second half of the eighteenth century.

Sir Brooke Boothby 1791, oil, 51 1/4 x 81 1/4", Tate Gallery, London





Kenneth Hayes Miller, *Fitting Room*, 1931, oil, 34 x 28", Metropolitan Museum of Art

KENNETH HAYES MILLER

Note: In American art of our time, Kenneth Hayes Miller, who died early in January, was for many years the foremost representative of the tradition inherited from the high renaissance. As painter and teacher, he stood for certain definite concepts—sculptural form, three-dimensional space, the integrity of the picture plane, and the classic qualities of design—that exercised a strong influence on many gifted artists of a younger generation. The following personal reminiscences were written by two of the painters most closely associated with him, as pupils and friends.

L. G.

Isabel Bishop

KENNETH Hayes Miller's presence on Fourteenth Street, New York City, was a fact of solid importance to many artists who seldom climbed the stairs to his studio. For one thing, he was always there. While others from this place tried living in New Mexico, Paris, Seattle, Italy, Maine, or, at any rate, were actually in New York but a few months of the year, Miller just stayed. And he became a symbol.

The physical presence of one painter, among the thousands in New York, however, even though he *was* always to be found in the same spot, year after year, in season and out of season, wouldn't mean very much in itself.

But two other kinds of steadfastness were present there. One, he was always working. That is, a visit at any time of the day or of the year would unfailingly find him engrossed in the making of a picture. Whether this so constant, unvarying application was ideal as a creative method, who can say? But this kind of steadfastness added to the symbol.

The potency of the symbol came mostly, however, from a deeper steadfastness—from an unchanging and fanatically held belief that radiated from him, perceived, I think, by susceptible students as an aura. This belief was that the pursuit of the art of painting is of an *absolute* importance, not at all dependent for its validity as a life commitment on the degree of talent in the pursuer, or on any other circumstance whatever. I remember with a smile Miller's saying to a student next to me in his Life Class (probably about 1919!) "Well, *kill* your aunt!" Obviously the aunt had been presented as an obstacle to a total immersion in art. Extreme as this attitude seems, and indeed was, it provided affirmation of a wonderful force. For in our American society, where art students have to fight against the strong and most "reasonable" parental pressure to give up this nonsense and go into father's coal business, even grown artists feel—sometimes more than they admit—the pressure exerted by the mores towards almost any other endeavor than "pure art."

The power of the mores to make themselves felt is a curious thing. Art seems to have very definite support in America. Collectors, though few, are active; museums are very earnest and enterprising in their efforts to promote art; education labels it "important"; it is highly publicized, and most citizens pay it lip service. Yet there is always the feeling that an artist has to move against the current of American life. He can't, so he is swept into little eddies and backwaters. The mores, after all, do not like art; do not like it, anyway, as an aim, as a pursuit.

What American father is delighted by his



Isabel Bishop, *Lunch Hour*, 1942, oil, 27 x 17½" Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio, courtesy Midtown Galleries

son's decision to be a painter or a sculptor? Yet imagination and energy in this country are so lively that, in spite of all the fathers, mothers, uncles and aunts, we have thousands upon thousands of artists, few supporting themselves by their art, but by teaching, illustrating, making frames, doing cabinet work, part-time jobs of all sorts. The works of art produced are of the greatest variety, interesting, energetic, much in the public eye and expressive of the essence of the time; yet always secretly judged by society to be a side issue, negligible among the important affairs of life. This fact speaks! But there is the ironic possibility that the art is more interesting, intense and contributive in the long run, *because* of its odd position of partial excommunication.

Robert Motherwell's metaphor is better. He says that in America art is an underground movement. I think this is deeply true; it explains the potency of the symbol those few artists and teachers become, whose almost saintlike unself-interestedness and singleness of purpose give them the position of Chiefs of the Underground.

Miller was one of those.



Reginald Marsh, *Couple on Beach—Coney Island*, 1944, black-and-white Chinese ink, 27 x 40", photograph Walter J. Russell

Reginald Marsh

KENNETH Hayes Miller will long be remembered by those of us who were his friends and pupils.

About 1927, Miller, who had seen my illustrations in the *New Yorker*, persuaded me to join his class at the Art Students League to learn the "Beautiful Art of Painting." As an introduction to his teaching he summoned me to his Fourteenth-Street studio. Upon my entrance, he motioned me towards the easel upon which stood his canvas of a girl seated at a table reading a note. He started his explanation of the picture slowly, clearly. I did not understand; I said nothing. He picked up his Titian book, which he studied. I trembled. (Titian, said the artists, was out of date.) I said nothing. He asked to see my sketchbook. He looked. Both of us said nothing. I took a ferry-boat ride.

The following week I entered his class. Like a column, pink-skinned plump Susie sat naked on a stool. Miller said, "Stain the canvas with an umber veil. Paint the middle tone, the dark markings, then the lights." I did. The oil medium annoyed me. The effect was of chicken scratches. He said nothing.

Weeks of toil passed. "Paint form, substance, not effect. We can't live on essences." "Go to the Metropolitan. I go each week."

"I never go to the country; there is nothing there. You live in the country." (I lived in Flushing, in the midst of cows, flowers, trees.) "Alex Brook leaves New York for the summer; get his

studio on Fourteenth Street. It is near mine." I did. Fourteenth Street looked like Fourteenth Street. "The people are ugly here," observed I. "They are ugly; they are people," said he. "Buy a pair of field glasses." I did. Miller was often criticized for not painting beautiful women: "Once I challenged Mr. Keppel to stand outside his gallery on Fifty-Seventh Street for fifteen minutes to find a beautiful woman. The challenge was not accepted."

The new environment was suitable. I painted thirty large compositions in a month and commuted to Flushing. Miller and I visited each other's studio daily.

Said Miller one beautiful June morning on Fourteenth Street, looking east to the sunlight sparkling over Union Square, then west towards the Hudson, "I am glad to be alive; this is the greatest landscape in the world. It is made by man. Nature we cannot understand. Theodore Dreiser made me go for an automobile ride once. I dozed between the towns. They talk about the Rue St.-Jacques. I saw it. It is small."

Fourteenth Street was inspiring. I worked hard. Miller said one day, "I haven't been out of New York for ten years. My only recreation is a ball game. Once a year I sit in Battery Park. Once a year I go to Coney Island. I'd like you to come with me." We went to the Battery at sundown one hot July night. The draft was so great we had to change places three times. In front of us was a steamer named "Owana." "What

a weak word," said Miller. I pointed to the skyscrapers behind. He turned. "This is the day of the flat building, flat painting, the flat remark."

Another evening we went to Coney Island. After going on all the roller coasters we sat facing the sea. There were a few people bathing—about fifteen thousand. Said Miller, "I am a painter of the body. You are a painter of the body. Sex is your theme." It was a grand day.

I spoke of a proposed trip to Reno. He said, "It will be wonderful. I was there with my mother for six months and read in the library all day. I read Shakespeare for ten years, then Milton for ten years." (Years later he reported reading *Finnegan's Wake* twice. "Can you understand?" I asked. "No," said he, "one can't understand anything anyway.") "The Far West is tremendous. It is greater than Europe. You feel the earth."

I spoke of my friendship with Llewelyn Powys, the writer. "He is great, he tells the truth, but he and John Cowper Powys think I am funny."

Thomas Eakins had died. I spoke of my friendship with Mrs. Eakins. He said, "A strong artist, a strong mind, a strong will. He studied with a strong artist called Gérôme, who taught fallacies. I saw Eakins' painting in the Brooklyn Museum and tossed my hat in the air. Ryder has substance everywhere. His *Fountain of Youth* is like Titian. I saw him paint it."

He urged me to do as he did and take the Fall River Line to Boston and back to see the greatest painting in America: Titian's *Europa*. "I look at it all day. I enjoy the throb of the paddle wheels at night on the voyage."

"Call me Kenneth," said he. "Wednesdays, my friends come and have tea." I was very excited and attended for years.

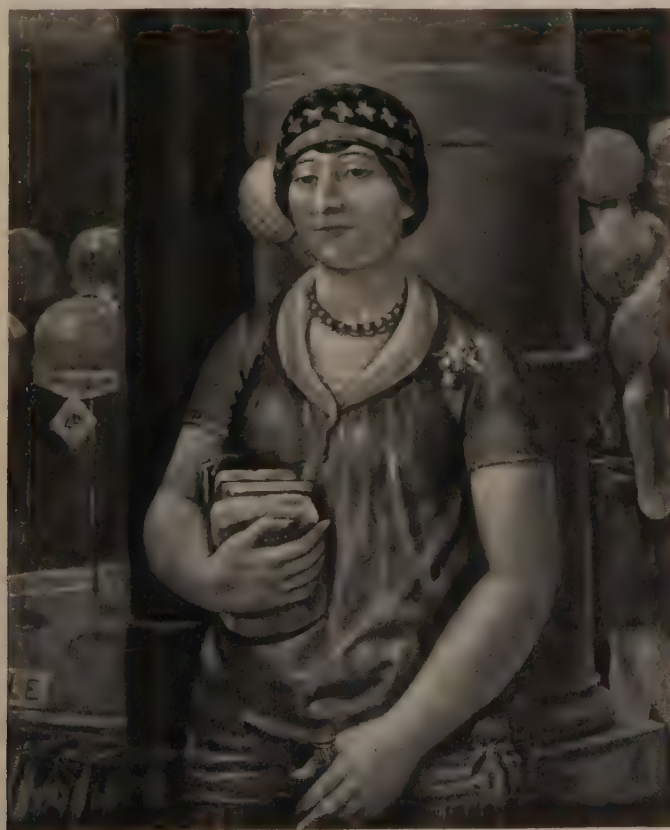
"The pernicious Miller influence," was the phrase recurrently hurled at him by the critics. He was hurt. But he neither relinquished his painting nor his researches. He never mentioned money. He lived modestly.

One year he talked much of Thomas Nast. We rushed down to Fourth Avenue to buy originals in the old Harper's. "Nast is like Michelangelo. He is greater than Daumier, the modeling of the heads goes further." He esteemed Delacroix—the only painter after Rubens to challenge him.

Other observations were:

"A Dürer woodcut tears the viscera. As a draftsman he had no peer, bar none." Or, "The greatest fallacy in art is the discovery of light and shade." "Today art is in abeyance, praises are bestowed downward, weakness is honored." Or, "I have put all I can into this picture." "I love my country. All I ask is to add a crumb, a bread crumb to our culture."

So lived Kenneth Hayes Miller. He was uncompromising, traditional and original.



Kenneth Hayes Miller, *Shopper*,
1928, oil, 41 x 33",
Whitney Museum of American Art

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY GARDENS AND FANCIFUL LANDSCAPES

Jurgis Baltrusaitis



Architectural vegetation at Marly (from Dezallier d'Argenville, *Théories et pratiques du jardinage*, Paris, 1747)

"The Gardners are not only Botanists but also Painters and Philosophers."
—W. CHAMBERS (*A Dissertation on Oriental Gardening*, 1772)

THE art of gardening evolves between the opposite poles of architecture and nature—the former an expression of order, the latter of freedom. But whether it is a prolongation of house or palace, or an extension of meadows and groves, gardening constitutes a world of its own and corresponds to a state of mind. In expressing the vision of an artist and thinker, it resembles painting—a medium in which all forms are a compromise between reality and abstraction.

Gardening has been associated with painting most frequently in the periods when it tended to depart from architectural order. Writers of the late eighteenth or nineteenth centuries pointed out that to plot a garden is to model in relief subjects generally depicted by painters (Duchesne, 1775); or to arrange objects as perfectly as a landscape painter might (Hirschfeld, 1779); or even to compose with trees as figures are composed in a painting (Delatour, 1803). In a scholarly poem on gardening, Delille in 1782 urged enthusiasts to:

*Be painters, all . . .
Brush, color, canvas are but these—
Rocks, flowers, water, bushes, trees. . .*

thereby combining matter with manner.

The vast literature on gardens which continues the medieval and renaissance tradition of treatises on architecture, perspective, proportion and so forth is intimately related to the general history of nature in art. All the problems of composing landscape forms and space are taken up in turn. The possible combinations considered include: space closed by a network of small compartments; perspective opening out into infinity; vistas blocked by a statue or a theatre; fanshaped or concentric arrangements; mazes; irregular forms which follow the contours of the terrain; space abstractly adapted from organic space by means of geometric or aerial perspective.

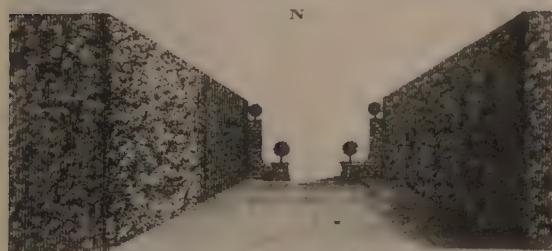
Each of these variations is characteristic of the style and optics of its period. On the one hand we find the ground leveled off and graded



Plan of a classic French garden (from Dezallier d'Argenville, *Théories et pratiques du jardinage*, Paris, 1747)

step by step, on the other we encounter natural hills and slopes; here are chequered plots, inlaid and bordered; there lie open stretches of lawn and unornamented greenswards. Shrubbery may be rectilinear, circular, trimmed into cones, pyramids or cubes. It may form dense walls, arches, whole edifices, bowers, pavilions, canopies, vases, animals, men—in short, may assume every possible shape except that of living plants! Trees and

Geometric and architectural vegetation (from Dezallier d'Argenville, *Théories et pratiques du jardinage*, Paris, 1747)



flowers, however, were sometimes preserved in all their wild splendor. Water, likewise, might either be imprisoned in pools and conduits or left undisturbed to flow and bubble freely.

One may note operating in these landscapes a poetic sense and a taste for speculation which infuses certain forms with life and with a metaphysical spirit. Sometimes there are even connections with astrology and alchemy. Thus the whole range of problems common to different realms of art—morphological and symbolical (or, in the now popular term, iconological)—may also be encountered in the treatises on gardening. And it is perhaps in this sphere, which deals directly with living things, that one may best trace the development and fluctuations of man's feeling for nature.

In this evolution two phases can be distinguished: one in which nature is subjugated and indeed almost completely annihilated by artifice, the other in which natural elements are recombined so as to preserve their original appearance—or, in the words of the Marquis de Gérardin (1777), "nature subservient to the dwelling or the dwelling subservient to nature."

The latter principle was the one which predominated in the second half of the eighteenth century, the period under consideration here. Formulated at a critical moment that marked a break with tradition and seeking expression in all directions, it often turned to the past for inspiration and made a specialty of exoticism. To follow this principle in operation can yield much information on concepts and the interpretation of ideas, even beyond the scope of our immediate subject matter and epoch. For some of the authors of these treatises on gardening were both scholars and poets.

Three types of gardens appeared successively in this period: the classical French



English style garden, Roissy (from Le Rouge, *Jardins anglo-chinois*, Paris, 1774)

garden, the English landscaped park which developed from about 1730 on, and the Chinese garden which around the middle of the century merged with the English park. The Duke of Harcourt, writing about 1774, briefly defines these types: "The French place geometric figures in their gardens, the English set their houses in a meadow, the Chinese construct formidable cataracts outside their windows. Here are three forms of abuse; all three, if corrected, lead back to true beauty." Of these three "abuses" it is only the first which seems shocking to up-to-date gardeners; they use the other two to wage war upon it. What we are witnessing here is a setting free of nature which overmuch geometrical thinking had, so to speak, denaturalized. But this liberation was not a mere destruction of shackles but came about through that "art which conceals art," as Rousseau wrote apropos of Chinese gardens in his *Nouvelle Héloïse*. And, as was the case with painters, the discovery of nature took place partly as a result of influences from abroad, as several of the writings make clear.

The most complete treatise, constituting a veritable anthology of the subject, recording all current theories and referring to all the sources, was that written by Christian C. L. Hirschfeld, councillor of the King of Denmark and professor of philosophy and fine arts at the University of Kiel. His five-volume *Theory of the Art of Gardens* was published simultaneously in German and French at Leipzig, between 1775 and 1783. Its most striking feature is its precise and minute analysis of forms. Each element and mechanism is methodically defined, and the quality and intensity of the resultant effects calculated. All this on a topic which generally eludes such meticulous treatment! The landscape is regarded as part of

the whole cosmos, a large portion of the earth's immense surface; it is composed of *cantons* or *districts*, the cantons in turn made up of *individual parts* or *scenes*. Technical terms such as these, borrowed from the jurisdiction of territories or from the theatre, suggest the character of the author's analysis, which directly relates topographic and dramatic laws.

The individual parts of the *canton* are defined by their composition (i.e., the site or formation of the terrain: plain, rising ground or hollow) and by the iconographic themes—rocks, hills, mountains, woods, bodies of water, meadows, distant vistas and undulations of ground—which vary and enliven the locale. Hirschfeld carefully describes not only the structure but also the expressive power of these elements. For example, he writes: "According to their height, extent and ruggedness, rocks can create particular scenic effects which inspire astonishment, awe, fright or terror. The more varied, bold, intertwined, singular or strange they are, and the more salient their contrast with their surroundings, the greater their effect. Those very forms which are most contrary to our ideas of beauty create the most forceful romantic impression. Peaks, splinters, jaggedness, deformations and mountain chains—in short, whatever deviates from regularity of line and orderly disposition of form, whatever draws the imagination away from the everyday and transplants it into an enchanted realm and to the strangest epochs of wizardry, has here its proper place."

This may serve as a definition of one of the main themes of the fantastic landscape as it developed in Italy (not without influence from Byzantine and oriental forms) and among the Northern mystics. Hirschfeld's last sentence ex-

PLICITLY evokes the middle ages. Thus the return to nature took place through a revival of exotic forms, without however abandoning the planned artificiality that until then had persisted in "classical" combinations. Though geometrized nature was replaced by an irregular and jagged nature, it was still hallucinatory.

Among these cantons a great diversity existed: there were pleasant, gay, smiling and attractive cantons; others over which a gentle melancholy reigned; still others were solemn. The landscape became a drama, an allegorical or musical play. Indeed, a whole series of garden compositions derive from the symbolical theatre. To begin with, there was the theme of the four seasons. The cycle of the year was represented by the spring garden, with its graceful, light and gay elements; the summer garden, with its Temple of Ceres; the autumn garden, strewn with ruins and broken columns; and the winter garden with its hothouses and aviaries. Whereas at Versailles (1662-68), Vaux-le-Vicomte (1656-61) and the Tuileries (about 1680), the four seasons had been represented by allegorical sculptures set in geometrical plots, now this theme governed the choice and arrangement of the greenery itself. The Duke of Harcourt, for example, suggested plantings appropriate to each category: For the winter garden, the exposure must be east and

south, the position close to the house, the area small, the site protected by a hillock. There should be but few flowers piercing the snow here and there; the plants must be sturdy varieties capable of sprouting leaves after severe frosts; the trees should be evergreens. As a "pantomime," winter was shown by an old man seated before a fire in a grotto of minerals, crystalline formations, icicles and slag, without any of the shells, corals, or the like which were reserved for the summer grotto. By contrast, the summer garden should have an east-west exposure, be situated at some distance from the house and occupy a more extensive area; its flowers, while as common as those in the spring, should be more showy; its trees should be tall, massive and densely leaved. Its structures and their decoration should be voluptuous, with crowded subjects richly decorated and gilded; chivalric tales set in some enchanted realm were appropriate tableaux. The subject matter sounds like a suitable prescription for painting. Poems on the seasons were particularly numerous at this period; in the decade following the French translation of Thomson's *Seasons* in 1759, similar poems by Bernis, LeBret, Saint-Lambert and others appeared.

In addition to the four seasons, gardens also portrayed the various times of the day: morning with the Temple of Apollo, noon with a grotto and evening with a Temple of the Moon. In his *Observation on Modern Gardening*, translated into French a year after its publication in English in 1770, Thomas Whately described the seasons and also stated that the elements of the garden should be so combined as to reflect the gaiety of morning, the intemperateness of noon and the serenity of evening. The arrangement of trees and flowers was now governed by systems resembling those which in the illustrations of medieval cosmographies had encircled the figure of the year.

Sometimes the allegories were more general in character. Ever since the Babylonians and Persians, the ideas of "paradise" and "garden" had been associated—a tradition which the Greek world continued. In Roman gardens, the landscape was regarded as sacred. Plautus placed gardens under the protection of Venus. Lucretius saw all nature as a garden—the epicurean earthly paradise. These ancient myths were revived in the middle ages and renaissance: the *Dream of Poliphilus*, written in 1467 and published two years later, depicted the Island of Cytherea as a celestial garden of regular disposition. As late as 1684-87, such visions as these inspired Mansard's colonnade at Versailles. With Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667-74), England of course had already rediscovered the primeval paradise, conceived as a wilderness. The epic of primitive nature took shape in the parks designed by William Kent, who, in discerning that beyond enclosures the world was originally a garden,

Rocky landscape: Hell, from Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry, before 1416, Musée Condé, Chantilly

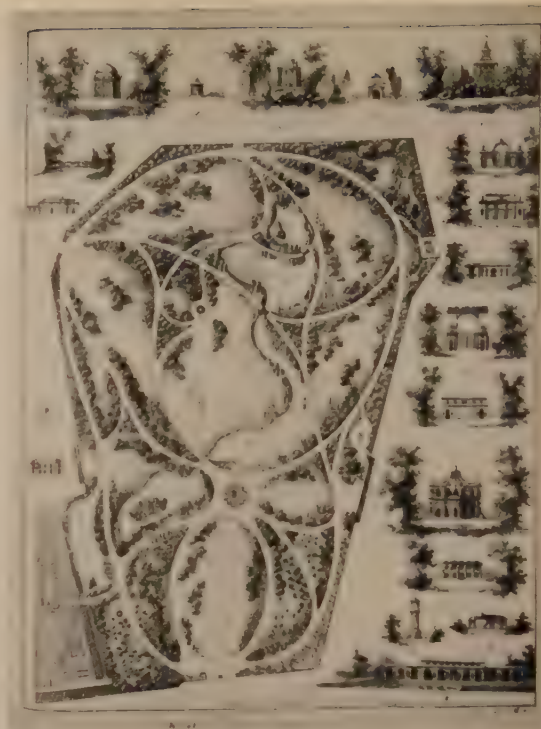


reaffirmed the idea of Lucretius. According to Horace Walpole (*Anecdotes of Painting*, 1771), Kent was "a painter, an architect and the father of modern gardening. In the first character he was below mediocrity; in the second he was restorer of the science, in the last an original and the inventor of an art that realized painting and improves nature. Mahomet imagined an Elysium but Kent created many."

This passage is frequently cited, by Hirschfeld among others. We may recall, too, that at this period the words "paradise" and "Eden" meant "garden" in Greek and Hebrew, respectively. The efflorescence of these new forms went back to an ancient idea; it marked a return to the pastoral—a revival of the age when man lived amid nature under happy climes, in Arcadia. Elysium is another name that recurs constantly in definitions of liberated landscapes. It is used by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in *La Nouvelle Héloïse* to describe the orchard at Clarens, which he contrasts with the classical types with their serried trees cut into the shapes of parasols, fans, monsters and dragons. We find it, also, in the title of a recent work devoted to the development of English gardens: H. F. Clark's "Eighteenth-Century Elisiums" (*England and the Mediterranean Tradition*, London, 1945). The same escapist obsession is manifest in many diverse concepts whereby nature, transfigured by art or by liberation, miraculously unfolds.

By this time the entire universe was often comprised in gardens. Previously, as at Versailles or Ognon, it had been symbolized by statues representing Europe, Africa, America and Asia. Now the theme was developed as part of an architectural microcosm that represented not continents alone, but various parts of the world. Pope's *Temple of Fame*, written in 1711, described an edifice with four façades, each of a different style, but equal in beauty. The west façade showed the Greek orders—for at this period, classical antiquity was regarded as the avatar of Western genius; the northern façade was gothic; the eastern reflected the Orient from Assyria to China; while the southern was Egyptian, with obelisks and walls laden with hieroglyphs. This strange and hybrid monument encompassed all the glories, horizons and eras of human culture.

The same subjects were intermingled in gardens; but where the philosopher's vision was monolithic, in the gardens the diverse elements were dispersed and independent. Pope himself began this dismantlement of his dream-temple on the estate at Twickenham which he bought in 1717. Here we find Egypt, in the shape of an obelisk raised in memory of his mother, as well as an ancient temple and a grotto. Pope was one of the promulgators of modern gardening and a friend of Kent's, who was to carry on the poet's work. Soon this universe was to come still closer



Plan of a landscaped park (from G. Thouin, *Plans raisonnés de toute espèce de jardins*, Paris, 1819)

to completion, for a few years later the northern and eastern façades were finished.

In the gardens at Stowe (1713-39), closely associated with Kent and lauded by Pope, a gothic monument figured along with monuments

Plan of Stowe (from Le Rouge, *Jardins anglo-chinois*, Paris, 1774)



Garden with Moorish,
Chinese and Gothic pavilions
(from J. Ch. Kraft,
*Plans des plus beaux
jardins pittoresques de France,
d'Angleterre et d'Allemagne,*
Paris, 1809)



Garden with Gothic chapel,
pyramid and Chinese pavilion
(after J. G. Grohmann,
*Ideenmagazin für Liebhaber
von Gärten,* Leipzig, 1799)



of antiquity and of Egypt. The theme of the four corners of the world appears again on the pediment of the Temple of Concord and Victory, by Kent himself, as a reminder of the general idea echoed and confirmed by Rousseau. When in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, M. de Wolmar shows Saint-Preux through his orchard, he explains that Stowe is a composite of various countries. "The master and creator of this proud and solitary domain," he says, "has even had ruins, temples and ancient edifices erected; thus different times and places are assembled there with superhuman magnificence." The introduction of the notion of different periods into this geographical countryside seems to recall Pope's allegorical architecture.

At Kew (1757-62)—where, according to Chambers, writing in 1763, "what was once a

desert is now an Eden"—the eastern façade of the world is completed with a mosque, an "Alhambra," the house of Confucius and a pagoda. From now on this fashion spread everywhere. Of course the natural elements had to be arranged in a manner corresponding to the monuments. In the Desert of Retz, designed by Monville (1785), there were an obelisk, a pyramid, a temple dedicated to Pan and a "ruined column"—a giant Doric column enclosing an entire house with cellar and four stories, an orangery, a Chinese pavilion and a crumbling gothic chapel. The Temple of Fame was here stripped of its solemnity and broken up, but though its elements were now scattered over lawns and groves the theme remains the same. Although its horticultural guise gave a new aspect to the allegory,

it still retained its visionary forms. The significance of these combinations is expressed by Delille, even though he disapproved of them:

*Clear out your gardens of this littered mass
Of diverse buildings which the mode decrees—
Roman and Greek, Arabic and Chinese;
This aimless, tasteless chaos you imbosc:
Rotunda, obelisk, pagoda, kiosk. . . .
Such sterile gardens nothing else can grow,
Though all four corners of the world they
show!*

Of the various parts of the world, it was the Orient, and more particularly China, which now began to undergo a remarkable allegorical development. Among the Celestials, the art of landscape gardening always expressed the philosophical system of the universe; moreover, at this particular period relations between East and West were especially numerous. Now this miniature universe, with its dwarf mountains and artificial rocks, was rebuilt in full disorder and asymmetry. It embodied the vision of a living world, synthetically contrived and pregnant with meaning. Such conceptions could more readily be grafted onto free rather than geometrical schemes, and in fact China contributed somewhat to their liberation. Even before Stowe boasted its pagoda, its oriental elements were already noted by Rousseau who, describing this "composite of very beautiful and picturesque places," recalled Chinese gardens. He defined it as a collection of different lands. There were, he said, rocks, grottoes and artificial cascades, as well as rare flowers and plants from all climes of China and Tartary, assembled and grown in one and the same soil. There were no beautiful promenades nor regularly divided compartments; instead, wonders ordinarily rare and dispersed were here gathered together in profusion. The universal character was directly associated with irregularity.

In his *Dissertation on Oriental Gardening*, Chambers, who on his return from China suc-

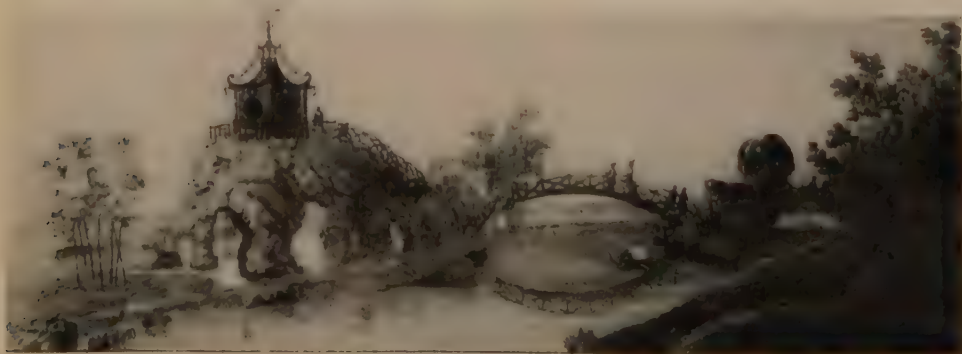
ceeded William Kent at Kew, also took note of this universal symbolism. Quoting a French Jesuit missionary, he wrote, "We are told by Father Attiret that in one of the imperial gardens near Pekin, called Yven Ming Yven—the Garden of Gardens—there are four hundred pavilions, so different in their architecture that each seems the production of a different country." It was doubtless this illustrious example that the English architect, renowned for his cult of things Chinese, had in mind when he multiplied pavilions on the estate of the Princess of Wales, building between 1757 and 1762 not four hundred pavilions, but twenty-one.

The idea of including the four parts of the world in a garden now assumed a deeper and more mysterious meaning as it mingled with landscaped forms. Sculptured monuments set up in a décor that suggested no given period now went out of favor, to be succeeded by plantings around pavilions and structures that still recall classical mythology. Again following Chinese precepts, allegory was transposed into landscape.

But in addition to their symbolical significance, gardens were composed of forms capable of appealing directly to the emotions. A landscape might be as moving as a lyric or as music. Thus Hirschfeld declared: "Man is so intimately bound up with nature that he cannot deny her action upon his soul. The beauty, grace, novelty, grandeur and wonder that she spreads before him arouse multifarious emotions in his breast. There are regions which invite us now to lively mirth, now to veneration, to wonderment, to a lofty gravity akin to worship; but others inspire us with an overwhelming realization of our weakness and our needs and fill us with melancholy, fear, terror and dread." This was a theatre which, though lacking human actors, had its dramatic rules; the play was enacted by the setting.

Here again China suggested refinements, while in two books on the subject Chambers spread the doctrine. Three sorts of scenes were presented in his gardens: pleasing, horrid, en-

Chinese pavilion and philosopher's house at Bonnelles (from *Le Rouge, Jardins anglo-chinois, Paris, 1780*)





石理陣



Left: Chinese rockery, 1588, Ting Yun p'eng;
right: Callot, Rockery,
detail of Temptation of St. Anthony, 1617



Rock garden at Woerlitz
(from J. G. Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin für
Liebhaber von Gärten*, Leipzig, 1799)

chanted. Here is how he describes them: "The enchanted scenes answer in a great measure to what we call romantic and in these gardeners make use of several artifices to excite surprise. . . . They introduce into these scenes all kinds of extraordinary trees, plants, and flowers. They keep in them a surprising variety of monstrous birds, reptiles, and animals which they import from distant countries or obtain by crossing the breeds. They are tamed by art and guarded by enormous dogs of Tibet, monstrous dwarfs, and African giants in the habits of Eastern magicians." (Is this not the fairyland of the oriental paradise with its exotic features, its artifices and fantastic fauna?) "In their scenes of horror, they introduce impeding rocks, dark caverns and impetuous cataracts rushing down mountains from all sides. The trees are ill formed and seemingly torn to pieces by the violence of tempests; some are thrown down and intercept the course of the torrents, appearing as if they had been brought down by the fury of the waters; others look as if shattered and blasted by the force of the

lightning; the buildings are some in ruins, others half-consumed by fire, and some miserable huts dispersed in the mountains, serve to indicate, at once, the existence and the wretchedness of the inhabitants." These visions of catastrophe, however, were but one act in a theatrical production which was to end on a bright note. "These scenes are generally succeeded by pleasing ones. The Chinese artists, knowing how powerfully contrast operates on the mind, constantly practise sudden transitions and the striking opposition of forms, colors and shades. Thus they conduct you from limited prospects to extensive views, from objects of horror to scenes of delight, from lakes and rivers to plains, hills and woods; to dark and gloomy colors, they oppose such as are brilliant, and to complicated forms simple ones, distributing by a judicious arrangement the different masses of light and shade in such a manner as to render the composition at once distant in its parts and striking in the whole. . . ." Here we have a masterly orchestration that plays with assurance on human emotions.

Chambers' text enjoyed a wide popularity. Most books on gardening appearing after 1757 reproduced it entirely or summarized it. Their authors were all haunted by this theatre, whose elements they continued to vary and enrich. In Watelet (1764) the repertory extends from the Noble, the Agreeable and the Serious to the Voluptuous, the Magnificent, the Terrifying. Gérardin (1777), who made a distinction between picturesque and philosophical landscapes, added the Heroic. Thomas Whately discerned rocks which by themselves "portray disaster rather than solitude and inspire more horror than awe"; he saw in them shapes characterized by majesty, by the marvelous and the terrible—and, he added, the terror aroused by a natural scene could be compared to that aroused by a scene in the drama.

For the Duke of Harcourt, flowers were noble (lily, tulip, anemone), pleasant (narcissus, jonquil, carnation), or grave (sunflower, poppy, calendula). Hirschfeld, although in principle opposed to the Chinese mode, classed his cantons according to the same categories. Boitard, who also published an almanac of good taste and French etiquette, tried in his treatise on gardening (1825) to define the difference between majestic scenes and those that evoked terror; between the picturesque, the rustic and the pastoral; between the tranquil and the smiling; between the wonderful, the fantastic and the surprising. Obviously there were certain extravagances in such speculations on the value of words and the meaning of forms. Nevertheless they reveal an attitude of mind, a way of interpreting and conceiving the art of landscaping in general. Nature itself was overlaid by such notions: a mass of ideas and sentiment was read into its composition and irregularities. Even in scenes without artifice, where everything breathed peace, it was a mystic nature. And this appears even more strongly in the supernatural tableaux which obsessed the gardeners of the day. Furthermore these supernatural scenes were often grouped in categories of their own: episodes from novels or romantic scenes in which we find the horrible, the enchanted, the fairylike.

Watelet's description is particularly typical: "A very wild place, for instance, would be one where torrents rush down headlong into hollow valleys, where sad rocks and trees inspire the soul with dread, where the eye would distinguish thick clouds of smoke, flames emerging from an occasional forge or from hidden glass-works. . . . These pictures of a *magic desert*, of a place suitable for evocation, would possess the irregularities and sounds appropriate to them; they would present a romantic aspect which would not even need the help of pantomime. Indeed, the imagination, deeply moved, could supply this quality; and at the moment when day darkened and the shadows of night took on



Dirk Bouts, *Fall of the Damned*, Paris, Louvre

their appropriate melancholy and accompanying illusions, one might well believe that one was seeing the demons, magicians and monsters that peopled this desert."

How reminiscent of Bouts, Bosch and the settings of all the *Temptations* after them! Such correspondences could be accidental, for the repertory of visions is not unlimited, and people constantly revert to the same forms. On the other hand we cannot forget that this was already a period when interest in the middle ages was reviving. Medieval dreams, demonology and symbolism attracted writers and artists more and more powerfully. Indeed, within the gardens themselves, gothic architecture increased apace. At any rate, the terms used in the writings agree with the elements of the fantastic landscape as the latter had developed from the fifteenth century on, particularly in the emphasis on its dramatic character.

Such, then, are the general ideas to be encountered in eighteenth-century dissertations on gardening. Here the whole problem of the attitude to landscape may be found concen-

trated, in the manner posed ever since the discovery of nature following the decline of medieval conventions. It is most striking that the process of liberation took place on two levels: the supernatural and the actual. There was to be no harsh realism, devoid of content, nor a simple abandonment of artifices and legends. The synthetic universe constructed by ornamentalists, architects and geometers was succeeded by a freer, more irregular world but a world which developed in a sort of faëry enchantment. Cosmogonic and fantastic themes intertwined; a longing for wonder and exoticism, the play of allegory and the theatre were also dominant factors.

As miniatures, drawings and texts make clear, medieval gardens had also made full use of symbolism, of regular, geometrical forms which combined order with ideal landscapes of a more uncultivated irregularity. Midway in the fifteenth century the gardens of King René d'Anjou recall Kent's Paradise. Following the Hundred Years' War came a period of ease and relaxation, when the nobility left their fortified castles to take up their residence in châteaux. The King's own garden of La Baumette near Angers is the outstanding example. Set on uneven terrain about a rock sixty feet high, and doubtless "majestic and

terrifying," it abandoned all regular, compartmented forms. Some scholars have seen in these meadows and flower-studded lawns the beginnings of landscape gardening. It was at once a retreat (a Franciscan convent was founded there in 1451) and an evocation of faraway places; one of its grottoes was an imitation of that of Ste.-Baume in Provence. Such, too, is St. Anthony's hermitage as represented by Henri Met de Blés in his painting in the Grenoble Museum, or St. Jerome's grotto in Patinir's canvas in the Prado.

Rare plants and a whole menagerie filled King René's garden. Hares, dromedaries, camels, white monkeys, Barbary goats, an elephant and some ostriches lent it a note of strangeness and the aspect of different parts of the world—just as the pagodas, pyramids and mosques served to do at Stowe, Kew and Retz. And at the close of the middle ages, too, following a period in which nature had been subjugated, it reappeared in the atmosphere of the tale and of the Orient.

Two or three hundred years later, we witness the same phenomena in the allied fields of gardening and painting. But it is only in the eighteenth-century gardens that we enjoy the privilege of having philosophers as our guides.

Joachim Patinir, St. Jerome in a Landscape, Prado, Madrid, photograph Anderson



Contributors

The article by R. P. BLACKMUR is the condensation of a lecture delivered last November 24th at The Frick Collection. Mr. Blackmur, critic and poet, is professor of English at Princeton University and is at present engaged in studies of Henry Adams, Henry James, Dostoevsky and the novel. A volume of his essays on poetry, entitled *Language as Gesture*, will be published next fall by Harcourt Brace.

CHARLES E. BUCKLEY is General Curator at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford and was previously a member of the staff of the Corcoran Gallery in Washington. His article on Joseph Wright of Derby is based on studies for a monograph on that artist.

The article by JURGIS BALTRUSAITIS is the outcome of a study in progress on "the Evolving Concept of the Middle Ages during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries." Well known as a medievalist, Mr. Baltrusaitis is the author of a monograph on the church of Germigny-des-Prés and of a monumental work on the influence of Armenia on romanesque art. A Lithuanian by birth, Mr. Baltrusaitis, son-in-law of the late scholar Henri Focillon, now lives in Paris.

REGINALD MARSH began his artistic career as a cartoonist for the *Yale Record*. Since then, in addition to his well-known easel painting and murals, he has found time to do magazine illustration, write a book on anatomy for artists, and teach at the Art Students League. In 1943 he was one of *Life's* artist war-correspondents. He still lives on Union Square, the subject of so many of his works.

ISABEL BISHOP also still paints in the vicinity of Union Square. Born in Cincinnati, she spent her childhood in Detroit and after coming to New York came under the influence of Kenneth Hayes Miller at the Art Students League. She has done a mural in Ohio, and her illustrated edition of *Pride and Prejudice* was a Book-of-the-Month Club selection in 1946.

Forthcoming

The May issue will include an article by GEORGE BOAS, "Civilization and Routine"; a study of the sculptor Alberto Viani by UMBERTO APOLLONIO; "Piet Mondrian: 1914-18" by MICHEL SEUPHOR; "The Late-Baroque Image: Poussin and Racine" by Wylie Sypher; and CAROL ARONOVICI, "Civic Art."

Letters to the Editor

Sir:

Your editorial, "Partial Criticism," in the February number, is an admirable stand on a subject which is usually met with little conviction or intelligence; and one hopes it represents the first step in a campaign. It is especially encouraging because it points to a variety of practices that are prevalent not only in our few newspapers and magazines which allow a little discussion of the arts but also in the pages of the *MAGAZINE OF ART*. . . .

Let me cite one recent instance in which I feel an authentic critical response was required and not met. This is your treatment of the Millburn Synagogue and Father Couturier's article on modern religious art. Certainly this involved one of the most curious and significant developments in the history of modern art; and with many of our most prominent writers addressing themselves to the problems of culture and religion, with many of these writers committing themselves to religious positions for the first time, with a prominent literary magazine having recently sponsored an extensive symposium on "Religion and the Intellectuals," with this (and much more in the same direction) as background, one had a right to expect that the Millburn Synagogue and Matisse's chapel, along with Father Couturier's statement, would be the occasion for a critical evaluation of what this combination of religious and artistic values means to us. Instead, the critical burden was not taken up at all.

I specify this particular topic because your editorial states the general breakdown of art criticism in a provocative way, and only by citing particular cases can discussion be advanced.

If we compare for a moment contemporary art criticism to the impressive achievements of literary criticism in our time, we can find few analogies. And the reasons for the success of this literary criticism might caution us in the future. Our modern literary criticism derives from a special necessity: a new poetry required a new criticism. It is still a criticism which is programmatic in the best sense: it stands for specific values and is animated by the kind of "individual conviction" you suggest is necessary for an active art criticism. Our painting is also new, but so far it has hardly any new criticism to assist or understand it. . . .

HILTON KRAMER

Dept. of English, Indiana University

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MAGAZINE OF ART

Sir:

The editorial, "The Lost Independents," in the December, 1951 issue was of particular interest to readers in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The democratic approach for the artist and community alike is definitely exemplified in the annual San Francisco Art Festivals, which have achieved great distinction as an effective vehicle for the growth of the spirit and the good, described by you as being conspicuously absent from the contemporary exhibition scene.

Any creative artist, working in sculpture, oil, watercolor, graphic art, ceramics, jewelry and textiles, who has resided in any of the nine Bay Area Counties for at least a year, is eligible to exhibit his work. He is not required to pass a jury of selection; and a jury reviews the exhibits only for the purpose of awarding prizes. . . .

The basic conditions necessary to satisfy the innate concepts of the independent artist are here present in vital, representative form. The intermediary is a municipally sponsored Art Festival, supported by public funds for facility and administrative needs. In 1950, through City Purchase Prizes amounting to \$5,000, the Art Festival began to fulfil its most important ideal. Owing, however, to economy-minded city fathers, the 1951 Art Festival had to by-pass City Purchase Prizes and substitute awards without purchase. The \$2,700 awarded in prizes in 1951 was contributed by private donors, whose fine spirit is indicative of the sincere interest which accrues to the annual San Francisco Art Festivals. . . .

This annual event is an effective vehicle by and for the artist, whether he is "avant-garde," "conservative," or "independent" in his approach and execution. It is truly the artists' own show, and the artists and public who participate alike share its benefits.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, the artists are pioneers in a movement which goes beyond the earlier Independents in vision, yet neither conflicts with nor duplicates the function of the museums. The combination of democratic concept, experience and administration for and by the artists is bearing fruit in ever-increasing interest on the part of the community—an interest tangibly demonstrated by growing attendance records and sales of the artists' works.

"The Lost Independents" have found themselves in the entire San Francisco Bay Area.

ORRAN I. GROSSMAN
San Francisco, Calif.

Sir:

Boston is indeed unique. It is striving to preserve the independence of its artists and its thousands of gallery visitors. It is the "rare exception" mentioned in your recent admirable editorial, "The Lost Independents."

The Boston Society of Independent Artists, Inc., born in a Beacon Hill stable in 1926, has just completed, in seven special exhibition galleries at the Museum of Fine Arts, its Nineteenth Annual. The six hundred twenty-four exhibits came from thirty states. Through the Society's Purchase Fund three sculptures, four paintings and ten prints were selected by thirteen of the twenty-one sponsoring New England museums for their permanent collections. These works, together with other selected exhibits, will be sent on a tour of various New England museums. . . .

Almost daily features at the Annual Exhibitions are demonstrations of artists at work in various fields of creative endeavor; also gallery talks by art teachers and critics. Bartlett Hayes, Director of the Addison Gallery, said that these shows are especially valuable because they give independence to the public which, unhampered by jury decisions, is encouraged to choose for itself. . . .

HARLEY PERKINS, President
Boston Society of Independent Artists, Inc.

Sir:

I am anxious to complete the list of my late husband's work for another edition of my book, *The Paintings of J. H. Amschwitz, R.B.A.*

There are many examples in this country, and I should be glad to hear from their owners.

SARAH BRIANA AMSCHWITZ
162 Bishop Street, New Haven, Conn.

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Film Review

Toulouse—Lautrec, Painter of the Parisian Bohème, produced and photographed by Peter Riethof, written by Carolyn Hector, narrated by Conrad Nagel. Music by Offenbach and other late 19th-century composers. 16 and 35 mm; color; sound; 3 reels (25 min.). Available from Riethof Productions, Inc., 80 West 40th Street, New York 21. Apply for rates.

Popular appreciation of Gauguin, van Gogh and Toulouse-Lautrec seems to focus as much upon the drama of their lives as upon their works. This personal, anecdotal emphasis sometimes leads to serious distortion. Although in color, and in every respect better than the imported Toulouse-Lautrec episode in Pictura's "adventure in art," the new film just released by Riethof Productions still leaves a first-rate film on this artist to be made. Aimed at a general public, the present attempt interprets Lautrec's life through his paintings and lithographs, according but scant analysis to his style.

To create Paris of the '90's, the camera photographs ladies in appropriate costumes, the streets and steps of Montmartre, the present-day tourist façades of the Moulin Rouge and Aristide Bruant's cabaret. In general the intrusion of actors and buildings is disconcerting; Lautrec's own images should certainly suffice. For instance, actual dancers are shown doing the can-can. Just as spirited, however, is the well-cut footage of kicking legs from the lithograph *La Troupe de Mlle. Eglantine*.

Lingering over details of photographs of the artist himself, the film pities his physical deformities. The dwarfed body might have been shown more vividly by a full shot of his entire figure, perhaps one of the several photographs in which Lautrec stands beside a friend.

The use of details—the magic as well as danger of any film on painting—is so constant that the spectator forms no complete sense of any single work. To what excellent advantage the camera can be employed, however, is demonstrated by the treatment of Lautrec's first poster, *Moulin Rouge: La Goulou*. The color progressions or states are each filmed in sequence and then merge into a screen image of the final poster.

Many of the personalities of Lautrec's demi-monde are developed at length, from the perverse vulgarity of *La Goulou* to the untutored elegance of Jane Avril. The sound track even offers the voice of Yvette Guilbert as the camera dramatizes, from the many lithographs and drawings by Lautrec, her grimaces and gestures.

Conrad Nagel narrates a commentary that is concise and well edited. Unfortunately the visual presentation lacks the same professional authority; cutting and selection of details do not always quite come off.

While certainly a valuable addition to the library of art films, I'd rather pay twice to see again the Toulouse-Lautrec ballet from MGM's *An American in Paris*. Or, better still, wait for José Ferrer's biography, to be filmed in France this year.

WILLIAM S. LIEBERMAN
Museum of Modern Art

Recent Art Film Releases

Craftsmanship in Clay: Decoration, produced by the Audio-Visual Center, Indiana University. Written by Karl Martz, directed by Harold Otwell, photographed by Robert Gobrecht. Fifth in a series on ceramic processes, the film shows the three basic materials for applying designs on a clay surface—clay, glaze and clay slip. 16 mm; color; sound; 1 reel (10 min.). Available from Audio-Visual Center, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. Sale \$100; apply for rental rates.

Gallery of French Sculptors, produced by Les Actualités Françaises; commentary by Arthur Knight, narrated by Ben Smith. The influence of Rodin on three generations of French sculptors. 16 mm; black and white; sound; 1½ reels (14 min.). Available from A. F. Films, Inc., 1600 Broadway, New York 19. Rental \$5; sale \$60.

Mark Tobey: Artist, produced by Orbit Films, directed by Robert G. Gardner. A study of the artist's life, personality and work. 16 mm; color; sound; 2 reels (20 min.). Available from Dimensions, Inc., 2521 Sixth Ave., Seattle 1, Wash. Rental \$7.50; sale \$225.

St. Matthew Passion, produced and directed by Ernest Marischka, American edition by Robert J. Flaherty; musical direction by Herbert von Karajan. Bach's oratorio performed by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and the Vienna Singverein, with a group of soloists, in English; illustrated by works of painting and sculpture from the 14th to the 18th century. 35 mm; black and white; sound; (80 min.). Available from Academy Productions, Inc., Suite 1607, 1501 Broadway, New York. Apply for rates.

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Book Reviews

The Art of the Artist: Theories and Techniques by the Artists Themselves, edited by Arthur Zaidenberg, New York, Crown, 1951. 176 pp., illus., 8 color plates. \$4.

Maurice Grosser, **The Painter's Eye**, New York, Rinehart, 1951. xii + 244 pp., 32 illus. \$3.

The Art of the Artist and *The Painter's Eye* are both by artists. That is their only trait in common. The former consists of short essays, informal in character, by forty painters and three sculptors. These essays do not pretend to plumb to the bottom of the ocean of art. As writing, they are amateur efforts, and their predominant modesty lends them added charm. Since they are mainly, if not entirely, by artists affiliated with Woodstock, Ulster County, New York, one feels at the end that he has had a good visit in a colony where artists make art a life, or as if he had received a welcome packet of shop-talk letters from his artist friends.

Mr. Grosser does not limit himself, in *The Painter's Eye*, to a single short essay. His painter's eye, experienced and unmythical, roves over the centuries, and he bases his deductions largely on what he has seen and not too much on reading and hearsay. He is, however, as familiar with the language of words as with the language of paint. *The Painter's Eye* is a challenging and lucid book on the art of painting by a professional painter and writer, while *The Art of the Artist* remains forty-three short essays which add up to a volume without pretending to add up to a book.

The volume, compiled by Arthur Zaidenberg, begins with a sympathetic introduction by Hughes Mearns. Then the artists take over. The range of this symposium goes from "Painting a Portrait" by Eugene Speicher to "The Use of the Object in Painting" by Edward Millman, or from "Landscapes" by Eugene Ludins to "Creative Painting" by Paul Burlin. The distance between the two extremes is about the same, Messrs Burlin and Millman believing that the artist is an inventor who destroys "naturalistic images" in order to build "esthetic equivalents." Messrs Ludins and Speicher enjoy a more objective world. Mr. Speicher is explicit and with quiet dignity defends the "noble art" of portrait painting. Mr. Ludins breezes into the symposium by

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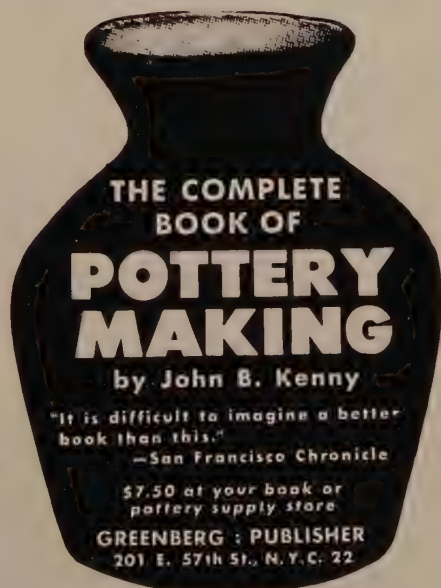
latest publication of The American Federation of Arts, will answer all these and other questions. Edited by WILLIAM MCK. CHAPMAN, Curator of Films, Addison Gallery of American Art, with an introduction by FRANCIS HENRY TAYLOR, Director, Metropolitan Museum of Art, **Films on Art** lists and appraises over 450 films—from simple "how-to-do-its" to critical surveys of modern painting.

Films on Art also contains useful articles by authorities in the field: IRIS BARRY, former Director, Film Library, Museum of Modern Art; CHARLES D. GAITSKELL, Director of Art Education, Province of Ontario; H. W. JANSON, Chairman, Art Department, Washington Square College, New York University; PATRICK T. MALONE, Director of Film Programs, Chicago Art Institute; PERRY MILLER, Director, Film Advisory Center; and ARTHUR KNIGHT, film critic.

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beginning: "Painting landscapes directly and on the spot is tremendous fun. I couldn't live without it. . . ." Mr. Ludins is all aglow and, curiously enough, glow is rare in this volume by artists.

Between these opposite conceptions other artists expound their individual outlooks. There are spots of churned intellectualizing, not unheard of in comment on art both by artists and laymen; there are a few wabbly profundities and one or two immaturities; but on the whole, unaffected, sober statements by artists who care—some experienced, some inexperienced—prevail and give the volume its varied and pleasantly personal character. Each exposition by an artist is followed by reproductions of his work. Sometimes these include the original sketches as well as the completed work. The artist's commentary explains the origin and development of his idea. This is done by artists who sneer at "realism" and by those who "go to nature," thus giving the book its scope and proving that artists of contradictory points of view can live in the same colony without setting each other's houses on fire.

Maurice Grosser graduated in the early twenties from Harvard with honors in mathematics. Whether or not his training in mathematical exactitudes influenced him towards a tangible and practical outlook and away from the mystical and emotional, the two books that he has published suggest that he is not dreaming about painting or about being a painter. He is doing. He goes around. He has made a close study of the physical elements in painting, of the public that buys art, of the dealers who sell art, of the museums which buy and exhibit art, of leaders in the collecting, museum and artist worlds, of curators, writers, composers and other stars in the national and international fraternities of art.

Mr. Grosser, in a word, knows the intricacies. Since he has a sharp eye and scorns people who see through their ears he has gathered unto himself esthetic, practical, social, economic, scientific, psychological, historical and sociological information based on what he has absorbed through clear seeing and thinking—information which he is able to convey to his readers with wit and clarity, qualities too often lacking in artists' pronouncements. The Salvation Army of Art will never be joined by Mr. Grosser. A good eye and an original mind, not a desire for salvation, are his prescription for painting and understanding.

The theory that artists cannot write because words are not their medium is disproved by Mr. Grosser's own writing. He shoots many arrows, some a little wildly, but all intended, from one angle or another, to deflate the romanticizing of the artist and his work and to annihilate the revivalists who like to sing hymns to art and listen and read about it and who worry when they look at it.

The only slightly worn part of *The Painter's Eye* (and not a large part) shows when

Mr. Grosser discusses the forgotten and almost forgotten nineteenth-century French academicians. Aiming his arrow at them is like shooting a corpse which has already suffered more arrows than St. Sebastian.

Mr. Grosser believes that the year 1841, "when photography began generally to be practiced and artists' colors could be bought ready to use in tubes is the exact date when the change in painting begins"—the change from the "planned picture" to the "spontaneous picture." He also believes that "it was the Impressionist revolution of 1870, not the Cubist revolution of 1910 which was responsible for Modern Art." (He always writes Modern Art with a capital M and a capital A.) He believes that "Modern Art is the official painting of today," and that contemporary artists who have advanced beyond the Modern academy should be defended "in their right to secede from all official painting." The author particularizes about the qualities and conditions of specific pictures, old and recent. He contributes a study on the chemistry of paint. He points his flashlight at many other subjects and illuminates the path which educated painters travel. To be sure, Mr. Grosser understands the value of shock—perhaps too well—and when he turns historian he is inclined to be sketchy. But the book is a stimulus to the eyes.

FORBES WATSON
Gaylordville, Conn.

Ray Bethers, *How Paintings Happen*, New York, Norton, 1951. 150 pp., 112 illus. \$4.50.

This is the newest of several volumes by the same author. It is made valuable by the distressing public ignorance as to what painting is. Not until a generation has been trained to be visually comprehending will American society reach an understanding of art comparable to its understanding of words. And, alas, this is not great. Books such as *How Paintings Happen*—no matter how elementary nor how obviously stated—will, therefore, continue to be justified until a different educational need arises. The simpler the presentation the better.

The present volume is simple. As the author points out, it consists of four approaches to the nature of painting: 1. Art is *not* a copy of nature; 2. Art conveys emotion rather than information; 3. Painting is a medium of expression in its own right and cannot be translated into words; 4. Painting as a fine art is made possible partly through its inherent limitations of actual space and time. Any one of them might have made a book, he suggests. I am inclined to think that the most unsatisfactory element of this book is that these four approaches are related by juxtaposition alone, rather than by any purposeful attempt to pull them together.

But it is not so important for a reviewer to complain of what might have been, as it is to appraise what exists. Mr. Bethers states his plan at the outset of the seventeen pages of introduction. First are the author's words and diagrams to help explain the structure of pictures. They form the first section and are continued beneath each painting.

Comparisons of paintings with photographs of the sources from which they have been adapted occupy facing pages for the balance of the book. Brief comments by each artist and remarks by the author on the composition of each painting appear beneath the comparative illustrations. These remarks are factual observations only remotely related to the quality of the picture and are but distant echoes of the introduction. An example or so will serve:

"There is a strong diagonal direction on the left which unites all planes from near to far, and which returns to the picture plane at the extreme right. A variety of inventive textures also plays an important part in the space and pattern relationships."

Or, again:

"Here are a motif photograph, a water-color sketch, and the finished oil painting. While both the sketch and painting use arbitrary space planes as part of their compositions, these planes are not used in the same way in both pictures."

This makes dull reading, and I'm afraid the general reader is none the wiser as to what

determines the painter's choice. Perhaps the author himself is wise not to impute to the painter intentions he may not have had. Nevertheless, the page-by-page emphasis on structure almost negates the introduction wherein composition is demonstrated as a *means* to an end, not an end in itself.

I am aware of the difficulties of brief interpretive exposition, having myself dabbled in similar attempts at enlightenment. So I would like to point out one or two details and one or two generalities which emerge from the book as worthwhile contributions to this business of explaining. As details, I would cite the excellent diagram (page 17) illustrating stages of abstraction, or the diagram made by Karl Kasten to demonstrate the relation between his very abstract painting and the scene from which it was derived (page 92); or the statement by Jean de Botton that "the subject of a picture is a politeness that the painter bestows on the spectator (page 64), and the dramatization of this statement by two paintings—a still-life and a landscape—that possess the same organization of forms and space, implying that the nature of reality is space and matter, and that the identifiable shapes are but transitory manifestations of this (an artist's way of uttering the scientist's hypothesis that energy may be converted but never destroyed).

As to generalities, the more than fifty comparisons of paintings with the consistently

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banal photographs of nature give the cumulative impression that the world the painter looks at is unspeakably prosaic and that from this monotony he constructs a view of the spirit, no less than does the poet. There is also the realization that the words and phrases of these painters show that the intent of many is the same, but the variety of the images which they individually create indicates solitary personalities at work. And, again, what most of these painters have written gives the general impression of articulateness. Some of them are well known, others relatively obscure, but in each a verbal acknowledgment of purpose contradicts the nineteenth-century notion that a painter's being is expressible to the eye alone. I have a feeling that this represents a change of attitude rather than a newly developed capacity, and that sensitive painters have always been able to take their rightful places in a rational world, rather than being set apart as mysterious, unfathomable creatures. By providing the repeated opportunity for word and image to exist side by side, this volume is constructively welcome.

BARTLETT H. HAYES, JR.

Addison Gallery of American Art

Elizabeth B. Mock, *The Architecture of Bridges*, New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1950. 128 pp., 170 plates. \$5.

This is a reasonably adequate contribution to the interpretation of bridge construction throughout what we are in the habit of calling the civilized world. The reader will find the specific analyses of the various individual bridges of considerable value but could hardly accept the author's definition of the function of a bridge without challenging its validity.

"The function of a bridge," says the author, "is simply the continuation of a roadway over a void, its structure is both means and end, and its reality lies not in space enclosed, but cuts through it. It is free from all intricate psychological considerations that must be taken into account when space is molded or enclosed." This is an elaboration of only a part of the definition given by Palladio and disregards the considerations of convenience, beauty and durability which Palladio did not overlook.

It is an accepted fact that there are no voids in nature, and that a bridge like any other architectural structure must mold its form to conform not only to its own habitat, but to its surroundings; it cannot be suspended in a vacuum without esthetic or "psychological" considerations. The continuation of a road presupposes origin and destination. Orientation is not dependent on technical abstractions but on the terrain to be connected. Approaches are not problems in construction technique, but of city planning and civic design, if a coherent and harmonious integration between the terminal elements of the

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bridge and the character of the communities to be connected are to be obtained. The architecture of a bridge must exploit all the available elements which will give the structure esthetic values—to be derived not only from its own self-contained form, but from the relation that such form may have in revealing beauty through the shadows cast on the water, the vistas that it may afford of worthwhile landscapes and urban structures, and the unification of the space to be spanned with the surroundings.

Expressing preference for the suspended cable bridge which “reverses the arch curve and grows wings,” Miss Mock contends that in this type of construction “substance seems to be transmuted to line, inert matter to naked energy.” In the same chapter, however, the admission is made that “lightly drawn bridges look unrelated to their surroundings” and the explanation given by the author is that it may be attributed to “brutality.” What is not made clear is whether the brutality is inherent in this type of bridge design or may be due to lack of a proper solution of the problem. Indeed, the concept of “mass as beauty” is relegated to the past era which no longer has “any validity.” I venture the assertion that mass is still a pertinent factor in architectural design, and that line is an abstraction which directs form but is in itself not a reality.

The critical footnotes dealing with individual bridges and their structural character are often pertinent, but nowhere has the author attempted an interpretation of the purely structural character of the individual bridge in relation to its surroundings. It may be added that except for three rather unfortunate examples, the author fails to give due consideration to the vast development of bridges constructed over highways and thoroughways, which afford such varied opportunities for architectural design with both utilitarian and esthetic values.

The book lacks the breadth and richness of material and the eclectic, historic and esthetic outlook which its subject deserves.

CAROL ARONOVICI
Greenwich, Conn.

Benjamin Henry Boneval Latrobe, *Impressions Respecting New Orleans*, edited by Samuel Wilson, Jr., New York, Columbia University, 1951. 196 pp., 24 illus. + 4 in color. \$8.75.

Benjamin Henry Latrobe was the first to make a full professional career of architecture and engineering in the United States, for which he was highly qualified by education and abilities. Coming here in 1796, he promptly achieved the highest position in both fields, designed and executed many of the leading works such as the Bank of Pennsylvania, the first Philadelphia Water Works, the Baltimore Cathedral, and for a long and trying period was Surveyor General of the United States. His last years were spent in New Orleans, where his struggle to complete his project for a municipal water supply ended in his death from yellow fever in 1820.

A man of restless industry and wide interests, he constantly filled his notebooks with sketches and reflections, besides conducting an immense correspondence. His letterbooks and several of his notebooks, which together constitute a chief source for the physical and cultural history of the time, are preserved in his family by Mrs. Ferdinand Claiborne Latrobe, Jr. To them the author has had full access. Excerpts from some of the notebooks were published in 1905 as the *Journal of Latrobe*. Now Mr. Wilson publishes in full those surviving from the New Orleans period, with an excellent introduction and notes. He knows New Orleans intimately and clears up every point about Latrobe's work there. Latrobe's pen sketches illuminate the text in its comments on the flora and fauna, topography, buildings and genre; the many plates give a rich selection of his drawings in pencil and in watercolor, several in color. As the years covered include a trip to Philadelphia by sea and return overland, these portray and comment on much more than New Orleans.

The book is admirably produced. It is at the same time of great documentary value, and of much human interest.

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Italian Painting, the Creators of the Renaissance, with critical studies by Lionello Venturi and historical surveys by Rosabianca Skira-Venturi, translated by Stuart Gilbert (Skira: Painting, Colour, History), New York, Skira, 1950. 205 pp., 105 color plates. \$15.

This is the first volume of a series of three which will cover Italian painting from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century. The series follows the general design of Skira's earlier three-volume *History of Modern Painting*. Again, all reproductions are in color and are placed as close as possible to the relevant texts, which are divided into critical studies by Lionello Venturi and historical and biographical surveys by Rosabianca Skira-Venturi. The handsome design and the color reproductions will probably give the book wide popular appeal, and it seems to have been intended for the general public, for, in addition to the fact that it is written in a popular style, it makes no new scholarly contributions to the field. Nevertheless, for the student of art history, the color reproductions should be extremely helpful, while the texts summarize the major artistic trends between the early thirteenth century and Leonardo.

Although most of the reproductions are of high quality, some are not, e.g. the detail of Gentile da Fabriano's *Adoration of the Magi*, which is very fuzzy; Paolo Uccello's *Battle of San Romano*, which lacks clarity on the left; Antonio Pollaiuolo's *Apollo and Daphne*, in which the light reflected from the raised forms of the leaves in the upper part makes them appear whitish instead of green. In some cases details rather than complete paintings are reproduced. This is not objectionable in itself, but when the text refers to the complete work, it is apt to prove somewhat frustrating to the reader to see only a detail.

The captions of some of the reproductions of complete works include the size in inches, but not all of them do so. One wonders why? It would be very helpful.

The generally excellent texts include a tremendous amount of information compressed into a very small space. They are not only concise but also easy to read. But can the art of three such important centuries be described in so few words without distorting, oversimplifying or modernizing it? The authors who write as follows have hardly avoided these dangers: "In contrast to the complex and demanding art of Uccello, we find in Domenico Veneziano a model

of the serene and easily accessible in painting, an adept of the light and graceful." Carpaccio's *Courtesans* is referred to as "that 'slice of life' at once so quaint, so entertaining, and so delightfully modern." Margaritone d'Arezzo's *Madonna and Child* is called "pointillist" in technique. Does the art of the past have to be "modern" to be appreciated?

Although Donatello and Ghiberti were not painters, their omission except for references in the text weakens the book considerably. The sections on Castagno, Pollaiuolo and Verrocchio are rather skimpy in comparison with the section on Botticelli. They were certainly not less important than Botticelli either as artists or as influences, but perhaps they are not so "easily accessible."

In spite of its defects this is a valuable book. The color reproductions alone should more than justify its inclusion in every art library in this country.

PATRICK T. MALONE
Art Institute of Chicago

Gerstle Mack, Gustave Courbet, New York, Knopf, 1951. xv + 406 pp., 60 plates. \$6.

The long-felt need for a detailed biography in English of the great realist from Ornans has been handsomely filled by this lively account. Courbet comes before us in these pages with remarkable vividness, and Mr. Mack's exhaustive researches have filled out the picture with a large cast of characters—friends, family, acquaintances and others—who help the reader to understand what kind of man the painter was. With an easy skill the author leads us through complex events and relationships of a tumultuous life: family difficulties, contacts with government officials, the cloudy affair of the Vendôme column and the last years of exile in Switzerland. A great number of small but significant details, with copious quotations from the correspondence, give a striking immediacy to an engrossing story. Students of nineteenth-century art will find this a most useful work, though they should probably still supplement it by reference to Riat's earlier study. The more general reader will find it hard to put down.

If there is any important defect in the book, it would be that although Courbet the man emerges from it clearly, the artist is not so distinct. Little attention is paid to the pictures as such, the important ones like *The Funeral at Ornans* and *The Studio* being discussed more as documents than as paintings. Only one short

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chapter is devoted to the crucial matter of realism, and the relationships of the pictures to the rest of the artistic production of the time are not made very clear. For example, the interesting differences between Courbet's and Millet's handling of country themes are not mentioned, nor are we told the exact nature of the former's undeniable influence on the impressionists. It may be that these matters fall outside the author's purpose, but for lack of them we have a less adequate conception of the artist's full stature.

The emphasis on Courbet's life is also apparent in the choice of illustrations, since twelve out of sixty are devoted to such material as family portraits, photographs of birthplace, studio, grave, etc., and the fall of the Vendôme column. These have a strong documentary interest, but in view of the painter's great productivity one could wish for more reproductions of the paintings themselves, upon which, after all, his fame rests. From so many it is admittedly hard to choose sixty, or even a hundred, but this reviewer found himself looking for favorites that were not there, and even hoping (in vain) for a plate of the rarely seen *Departure of the Fire Brigade*.

These comments are not intended to suggest that the book is not a valuable one; on the contrary, they are rather the result of a real pleasure in the contents of an illuminating book. Having much, we often find ourselves perversely wishing for still more.

JOSEPH C. SLOANE
Bryn Mawr College

Diego Angulo, Enrique Marco Dorta and Mario Buschiazzo, *Historia del arte hispano-americano*, Volume II, Barcelona, 1950. 930 pp., 835 illus.

The purpose of a good reference book on art is to provide a variety of information in a sound and orderly fashion. The three authors of this second volume in a projected series of four succeed admirably in presenting the first comprehensive account of Latin-American art in the seventeenth century. The chapters on Mexico occupy the bulk of this weighty volume; this is due not only to the importance of that country's artistic production, but also to the fact that Diego Angulo has included the eighteenth century as well. The stylistic evolution of Mexican architecture of these two centuries, much less studied than that of the first eighty years after the Spanish conquest, is traced step by step in

a scholarly and objective fashion. Sources and schools are analyzed without emotional or nationalistic bias, despite the strong personal attachment that Spanish scholars naturally feel to the Hispanic field. The reader will be impressed as never before by the incredible richness and variety of the late Mexican baroque of the eighteenth century. Here is one of the most extraordinary phenomena in the architectural development of the entire world—a fact which only a few historians fully comprehend as yet.

Angulo's study of Mexican colonial painting benefits by his thorough knowledge of the Spanish schools from which it in great part derives, a knowledge other students of the material have not possessed in the same degree. The chapter devoted to altarpieces is one of the most valuable, for here is the first attempt to examine them with professional art-historical method.

The chapter on Brazil (included although it is not an "Hispanic" country in the strict sense of the word) was written by Professor Mario Buschiazzo of Buenos Aires. Professor Marco Dorta of the University of Seville provided the sections on Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia and Venezuela. Consideration of the late-baroque developments in all these countries has been postponed for inclusion in a succeeding volume. Best studied here are the cities of Lima, Cuzco and Quito, where the monasteries and leading churches are fully documented and thoroughly analyzed. Bolivia, where little archival research has been conducted which might provide a basis for a reconstruction of the artistic development, receives more summary treatment. Professor Marco contributes, however, for Chuquisaca Cathedral, important new documentation discovered by him in the Archives of the Indies in Seville. His brief chapter on colonial painting in South America includes the first competent résumé of the activities of Pérez Alesio and Angelino Medoro, Spanish painters who passed some years in Lima.

In a work of such vast scope it is always possible to discover omissions of significant monuments, some errors of fact and opinions which might be challenged. Such criticisms of the present volume are inconsequential, particularly in view of its monumental contribution to a major epoch in the history of art, knowledge of which is still limited to a few specialists.

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- DEGAS, text by Daniel Catton Rich (Library of Great Painters Series), New York, Abrams, 1951. 128 pp. incl. 20 illus. + 50 color plates. \$10.
- Dunlop, R. O., *HOW TO PAINT FOR PLEASURE: A HANDBOOK FOR BEGINNERS*, New York, Pellegrini & Cudahy, 1952. 143 pp., 20 figs., 8 black-and-white + 4 color plates. \$3.95.
- Ford, E. B., *BRITISH BUTTERFLIES*, illustrated by Paxton Chadwick, Baltimore, Penguin, 1951. 31 pp., 16 color plates. 95¢.

- Goodrich, Lloyd, *JOHN SLOAN*, New York, Macmillan (for the Whitney Museum of American Art), 1952. 80 pp., 46 black-and-white + 3 color plates. \$3.
- GOYA, introduction by Rodrigo Moynihan (Faber Gallery), London, Faber (distributed by Pitman), 1951. 24 pp., 10 color plates. \$1.95.
- GRANDMA MOSES: *MY LIFE'S HISTORY*, edited by Otto Kallir, New York, Harper, 1952. xi + 140 pp., 16 black-and-white + 16 color plates. \$3.50.
- Jouvet, Louis, *TEMOIGNAGES SUR LE THEATRE*, Paris, Flammarion, 1952. 248 pp. 575 francs.
- Jouvet, Louis, *ECOUTE, MON AMI*, illustrated by Christian Bérard, Paris, Flammarion, 1952. 65 pp., illus. 375 francs.
- Morrison, Hugh, *EARLY AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE*, New York, Oxford University, 1952. xiv + 619 pp., 485 figs. \$12.50.
- PIETER BREUGHEL, introduction by Trenchard Cox (Faber Gallery), London, Faber (distributed by Pitman), 1951. 24 pp., 10 color plates. \$1.95.
- Proske, Beatrice Gilman, *CASTILIAN SCULPTURE: GOTHIC TO RENAISSANCE*, New York, Hispanic Society of America, 1951. ix + 525 pp., 328 illus. \$15.
- Ruhemann, H., and E. M. Kemp, *THE ARTIST AT WORK*, Baltimore, Penguin, 1951. 72 pp., 175 illus., 32 in color. \$2.
- Shaw, Theodore L., *WAR ON CRITICS*, Boston, Stuart Art Gallery, 1952. 208 pp. \$3.50.
- Vallentin, Antonina, *LEONARDO DA VINCI*, translated by E. W. Dickes, New York, Viking, 1952 (2nd edition). 561 pp., 31 plates. \$5.
- VAN GOGH: Volume II, introduction by T. W. Earp (Faber Gallery), London, Faber (distributed by Pitman), 1950. 24 pp., 11 color plates. \$1.95.

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